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CHURCH GOVERNMENT.

A TREATISE

COMPILED FROM HIS LECTURES IN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARIES.

BY

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"Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it."

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PREFACE.

THE substance of over forty years' teaching on church government is condensed in the following pages. These teachings were not the same through all generations in course at the seminary, but varied in form and extension from time to time in order to face the changing aspect of controversy in this field of study, where so many questions are open still, and problems which, though settled once, are unsettled again. A tardy compliance with formal petitions of successive classes to have my lectures published will perhaps exhibit much that was not heard in the class-room by any one particular class, and much may be remembered that seems to be omitted here. But all may discern, I think, that there has been no change of principles in the granite foundation of my own convictions, laid by the Bible as interpreted by Westminster literature of the seventeenth century, and the reproduction thereof, with lucid and masterly exposition, by Drs. John M. Mason and Samuel Miller, in the first half of this century.

Of course I am indebted to these and like sources for many a thought, and the assimilation is now so complete that it cannot be solved or assigned to this and that derivation. But I write as a teacher more than as an author, and the intelligent reader will see that the man who stands by his standards in attempting to teach "the

generation following" must give what he has received rather than what he has contrived. I claim invention of order more than of thoughts and words, independence in managing the premises, guiding the conclusion and handling the logic of events.

God's word is my text-book, and its lines referred to are quoted, for the most part, in full on these pages to save the reader time and trouble in pondering citations. Certain words and phrases must be capital in such a book as this; they are used as keys continually to indicate the scope, design and distinctive nature of such a work. These are, in this case, "representation," "organization," "private judgment," "spiritual despotism," and the like. So, also, there must be some repetition of idea in the application of the same thought to another side of the main subject or a subsequent step in the same movement. Yet redundancy in this way will hardly be observed when the reader's mind is fairly occupied with the consecutive drift of an argument.

Words from the inspired Scripture are sometimes inserted in the original form, especially Greek; but these are accompanied with translation, and in such a connection as to be understood by readers not acquainted with that ancient language. For my readers will see throughout the volume that ruling elders, whether learned or unlearned, are a leading order, in the writer's judgment, to be understood, instructed and animated with ever-increasing concern.

ALEXANDER T. MCGILL.

PRINCETON, 1888.

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INTRODUCTION.

THE main embarrassment of Christianity is a conflict within between the forms and the substance of true religion. Forms, however, in such contrariety must be false and alien, so far as they distort a fair expression or clog a free propagation of the truth revealed in the word of God. For the moulds of divine evangelism can be no more opposed to its meaning than the natural configuration of the human body can be unfavorable to the development of life and the activities of the soul in its habitation here. Therefore, to have discrimination fitted for the day in which we live, and to cultivate our talents for a seasonable service in defence of the gospel, we should learn assiduously what are the forms of polity which God approves as best for the purity, permanence and glory of his kingdom on earth.

We should beware of indifferentism here, and that extreme simplification which would eliminate body and figure from the elementary conception or ultimate idea of the Church in the world. Because we confront the traditional arrogance which makes her altogether visible in time, we are not to err at the opposite extreme of notion that she is nothing to speak of in one visible form more than another; that her mission to man in the body has no body itself in the contact of persuasion; that visible ordinances are only conventional forms of quietism, and

the communion of embodied humanity with an invisible Head in heaven must be impalpable as the rounds of Jacob's ladder in the vision of a dream.

Fancy like this in generalization reverses the tenor of sacred history, which made the mystical precede the real, and typical theophanies go before the actual incarnation of our Lord. And when the Word was made flesh, calling himself "this temple," for our eyes to see and our hands to handle, can we say that his Church he came to "build" is a phantom in definition and not to be seen henceforth, in its right shape for Jew or Gentile, as anything else than a babel of every pattern, without even an outline prescribed by him or his apostles? Carried even to the invisible things which are made, this lax imagination reckons absurdly on the whole creation that is not seen as chaotic and void of organization. Invisible gravitation organizes a visible universe. Magnetic attraction and electric power make forms and movements of manifest order, in many things visible and used, with which organized life is ever progressing. And shall these energies of nature do more to regulate ordinary life than the power of grace and truth, which came by Jesus Christ, to make a becoming visibility in the Church they create? There is a "temple" to be thought of in the abode of spirits on high—organism, of course, in the Church invisible and triumphant, according to the Apocalypse of prophecy—where there is no temple to be seen. The immanence of that eternal Spirit who garnished the heavens at first is there essentially active in organizing alike what is seen and what is not seen.

Christ, who is formed within us the hope of glory, had a body like ours prepared and given to him, and what was

given to him he gives to the Church he redeemed. "Body, soul and spirit" are sanctified by union to him. And the mystical incorporation of which he is Head must, of course, be seen and unseen both, and organization made alike, in the visible and invisible constitution of such an existence. Morover, the most radical idea to be formed of this incorporation is in the analogy of our bodies and members—the eye, the ear, the hand, the foot—the interdependence of these and their common relation to the head as well as to each other, and the whole complexity a perfect organization. The most elementary conception of the Church, therefore, must be inadequate and too simple to be true which leaves organism out. Error is always more simple than truth. And the rage for simplicity, which turns the Church to a dogma for the sake of a clear-cut definition, will hazard the loss of her nature as it is revealed in the Scriptures and ascertained in all history and observation.

Abstractions will never define and mysticism will never unite the Church. Her nature is concrete. The gospel is a religion of facts, and the revelation which contains it is history more than philosophy promulged for the redemption of man. We must go, therefore, to the Bible for the delineation we seek and the discussions we propose. The word of God in both Testaments will give us a unit of organism in the features of an everlasting Church "which in continuance were fashioned," and this no "shadowy model." When the shadows of type and ceremony, priesthood and altar, sacrifice and incense, were made to pass away at the fulness of time, and we look to Jesus, with his apostles, to "show us the form of the house and the fashion thereof," we see it in their conduct, example and teaching. We see them

going to church, recognizing the substance when the shadows were fleeing from "the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world."

Dr. Charles Hodge has well said in *What is Presbyterianism?* that "the Church is a self-governing society distinct from the State, having its officers and laws, and therefore an administrative government of its own;" "it is a theocracy" "limited and guided by the Scriptures" "in the hands of legitimate officers." Such a description of the Church on earth suffices to indicate organization as a predicate thereof—first and last, visible and invisible, "the ultimate idea" as well as primary and elemental. Objectively considered, it is form and order positively instituted; subjectively considered, the faith which unites us to Christ, the Head, unites us to one another as members. This union, both visible and invisible, must of course, be organized by regulations of mutual duty emanating from the Head himself.

"The true light" which came in the advent of Christ at the incarnation of his person was no torch of revolution, nor even flame of reformation, to the progress of man, consuming the arches behind which spanned, as it were, an abyss between the Old Testament and the New. It was the "sun of righteousness" by which we could see, descended and descending, past, present and future, an organized ecclesia waiting for its own conversion to the Christian faith. Subsisting through all varieties of patriarchal, judicial and regal theocracy for ages, and at length manned with Jewish bigotry, it was, nevertheless, a peculiar machinery of order found intact and suitable for all the purposes of Christianity while time endures.

It is designed in the following pages to prove the recognition and continuance of this plan by the founders

of the New-Testament Church as a liberal form of government well tried and safe not only, but a conspicuous link for identity of the Church under all dispensations and diversities of ministration by the same Spirit—prophetically and exegetically and ecclesiastically one and the same Church. Elderships of old became in apostolic times the true "historical episcopate" of the Christian Church. Elders and deacons alone made up the ministry of orders in primitive time, as the sacred records attest, making elder and bishop convertible terms for one and the same office.

It was not in the scheme of salvation designed that an interval between the Testaments should become a chasm in the external history of redemption more than the internal. It was in all respects a "fulness" of institution as well as of doctrine, and the only change to be made was the abolition of prefigurative appointment in the temple and its threefold ministry, with all the ceremony and ritual that belonged to "a shadow of good things to come." "The very image" of these good things was now to be seen in the sanctuary of prayer and instruction where our Lord and his disciples were brought up to worship, and where they began to preach and teach without ever a word of fault found with the method of service and organization. And when they were cast out from the meetings there by majorities of unbelieving elders and people, they organized precisely similar meetings and modes familiar to the people, calling them churches. The testimony of Jesus remained with these when his own work was done. The great commission was consigned to these, and elders came to the front for its tradition.

There never was a time when the students of revealed

religion might consistently overlook a "pattern shown in the mount" or neglect to search with carefulness and zeal for the true model to which our Lord would have the visible constitution of his Church conformed. At the reformation from popery, next to the doctrine of justification by faith, the cardinal questions of that revival turned on principles which underlie the study before us. Even the rule of faith could not be ascertained and vindicated against the corruptions of Rome without asking, "What is the Church—her headship, her membership, her charter, her authority and her mode of transmission?" In short, all the materials to be gathered and shaped in the structure of church government lay at the basis of that happy reconstruction of the Christian Church in which we have an evangelical system restored and established.

But the great Reformers, like mighty men who guard the trophies of a battle carelessly after all the waste of blood and treasure in obtaining them, were too indifferent among themselves about the best forms of polity independent of the State and most becoming and conducive to the work of a ransomed Church. For the right of private judgment and the word of God in the hands of the people and the priesthood of all believers and the symbolical sense of sacraments they were valiant and uncompromising, but for complete emancipation from the traditionary union of Church and State in government, from the canonical bondage to superstitious liturgies and mitred prelates, there was little or no enthusiasm and much questionable consistency. Luther allowed a dominating hierarchy in Denmark; Calvin allowed the same in England; and the contagion of their indifference overspread the first Reformation and descended to the gen-

erations following as a genesis of deistical doubt respecting all the positive institutes of revealed religion.

For natural religion of itself can have no consecrated forms. Clear and universal, and even authoritative, as its dictates may be interpreted by man, there is no framework for the conscience in which they can be set without legislation above us. Conventional universality itself were bootless without the Deity on high giving it sanction, with positive ordinations in forms of embodiment which contain revelation by word as well as by work. Positive religion only can live, while positive philosophy must die. When Robespierre in his political sagacity saw that atheism would prevent for ever the reconstruction and consolidation of the social system in France, he induced the Convention, which had abolished the forms of revealed religion, to ordain certain institutes of natural religion—the existence of a God and the immortality of the soul as dogmas, and orations to be delivered and hymns to be sung in honor of the Deity at stated times or decades, ten days instead of seven for the week—as the ceremonial of this infidel renascence. Fifteen or twenty churches of Paris were opened, funds were appropriated from the national treasury, and much enthusiasm was kindled among "theophilanthropists," as they were called. But it scarcely endured one year; it had no warmth nor force, and its few admirers quit with fatigue and disgust; and in less than two months after the "festival of the Supreme Being" its high priest suffered death at the guillotine. Churchly forms are therefore a standing peculiarity of revealed religion, positive, sacred and simple, as becomes the majesty of God himself, demanding our attentive study and strenuous conservation as they are given to us in his word.

The opposite extreme, however, is regained in our day by natural reaction and the sensuous proclivities of our own religious nature in its taste and sentiment. Forms have triumphed over creeds, have petrified enthusiasm, substituted Nicene for apostolic Christianity, and would now summon all diversities of faith and practice to a rubrical union with the title "Protestant" omitted.

In England the day of Roman Catholic emancipation was the birthday of Puseyism. That achievement of liberal policy was less the result of justice to the oppressed than lax indifference to existing forms of security provided for the established religion of the kingdom. Political ambition had done it, and the Church was alarmed. A mighty conservative zeal was awakened which spread through all Protestant ranks, from the humblest vicarage of the realm to the throne of William IV. But, unhappily, this great indignation fell under the guidance of a State religion stalled and mitred instead of a general assembly of churches represented fairly. Oxford Tractarianism was enlisted, and, as in mediæval time, the hope of true Christianity turned to the universities for counsel and help—in vain, and worse than in vain.

The learned Oxonians issued their tracts, antagonizing Rome on her own chosen ground of historical development and post-apostolical formation. They sought eagerly to find out a Catholicity more catholic and antiquity more ancient, and discovered their Augustan age in the days of Constantine and the œcumenical councils which followed rather than the days of Christ and the testimony of his apostles. Thus prelacy waked only to slumber again, and that more deeply. The upper level

on which it entered to throw up defences against the aggressions of degenerate Romanism was but the patrimony of papists, the quarry of their foundations, and not a stone could be had for breastwork against them which had not been secured for their own use and shaped for the tradition of ritual and pomp, cathedral pride and spiritual despotism. Puseyism soon quashed the indictment which her own logic had written, and now writes out a legacy to Rome against even the British Reformation. This comes of extravagant formalism, which makes the outward organization too much for the inward life and historical tradition more essential than godliness and truth.

If, then, we had no other lesson on the subject than these ruinous variations of sentiment—verging one while to the line of infidel indifference, and another while stiffening and turning back to the rubbish and mummeries of papal superstition—we are sufficiently admonished now to make the polity of the Church a diligent study more important than ever. No minister of Christ who is set for the defence of the gospel can avoid, without unfaithfulness, the duty of contending for the casket as well as the jewels it contains, the body as well as the soul in spiritual cure, the visible as index of the invisible organization, the complexity of matter and mind in that pathology of human life in which creation and redemption together consult for the supreme well-being of mankind.

Truth, in this department as in others, will be found a just mean betwixt opposite extremes. One of these is that there must be a certain organization of the Church so legitimate and essential that there is no valid ministry and no covenanted salvation without it. The other is

that no form of polity is given us in Holy Scripture, and we are authorized to shape it altogether by the circumstances in which we are placed and the opportunities of our own expediency. The former is popish and prelatical doctrine; the latter is, for the most part, the tenet of non-historical and reactionary bodies that have emerged from hierarchical oppression in different ways and on different occasions with protest which carried them too far, without discrimination between a divine sanction and the perversion of it which they repudiate.

As we take our stand on middle ground, we see the right order of study inverted—unwisely, though not unwittingly—by the priesthood we oppose. They contend that a knowledge of the Church is first and lies at the foundation of all religious knowledge. Comprehending this traditional thing in the form they offer it to faith, we have, it is said, the infallible clue to all other subjects within the range of theological pursuit. A similar mistake, however, is chargeable to the opposite extreme, of postponing all acknowledgment of the Church until the truth is found out for ourselves and a regenerate membership is gathered to compose the body. For the true Church is a "pillar and ground of the truth" to be seen and read of men as soon as they see the inscription upon it—an authorized constructure whose genuineness is tested by the word it publishes. We are born within its pale and baptized on that account, and added to its full communion on credible profession of a saving change. And thus even a primary education in the knowledge of truth is a study of the Church all along, and, whatever else she may be in polity and profession, her true accessions are never to be called "an army of raw recruits," as Wesleyans were once reproached by

English churchmen. Simultaneous with revelation itself has always been the figure of a Church—"her seed," as in the first promise, "holy city," as in the last description.

Returning for a little here to the other extreme, we lose antiquity and origin itself in the pretension of a Church to be known before the truth and where infallibility of learning reposes. The lesson and the school begin together. Before Abraham was Christ was, and where Christ was the Church his body was, in word and type and prophecy inscribed upon her pillar. Even then she was known by the inscription upon her, with divine purpose and never at all by the commandments of men except as a fallen pillar. The Church was part of the truth and the truth was declared by the Church from the beginning, and these two—so distinct, but inseparable—are like the Urim and Thummim, "those oraculous gems on the breastplate of Aaron" which are still so conjectural in signification, though not obscurely rendered by the Vulgate translation: *doctrina et veritas.* Or, if we say with others that "light and perfection" is the sense of the mysterious emblems, we have the same thought of simultaneous and intertwined duality contemplated in all Bible reading. "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee;" "Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined." Where truth does not shine from the oracles of God explained, a Church is extinguished; where a Church, so called, hides her light under a bushel, barters the truth away for place or popularity or power in secular conformity, she totters to a fall.

The Fathers in the first four centuries had a glimpse of this fact that neither before the truth nor after the truth,

but with the truth as part of its own revelation, to be seen only in its own light and estimated only at its own value, is the Church of God. Jerome, in his commentary on the one hundred and thirty-third psalm, says: "The Church does not consist of walls or visible things, but of the truth of dogmas; there the Church is wherever true faith exists." Augustine, in his treatise on the unity of the Church (lib. 10, cap. 3), says: "Let us not listen to what I say or to what you say, but to what the Lord saith; for surely there are divine books, and in regard to their authority we must agree to every one, believe in every one, obey every one. There must we seek the Church, there must we order and try our cause." This patristic postulate we accept, and propose to seek the Church only in the Holy Scriptures, and therefore abreast with every other study in sacred learning. Correlated, combined and pervading every other department—not excepting interpretation, of course—must be this element of ecclesia as alike containing and contained without being either superlative or disparaged in the curriculum of a theological seminary.

The polemists of hierarchy allege that theirs is a shorter way. Taking the Church in our arms at first with implicit faith in that unerring tuition she promises, we are led in all convenient seasons at once to the truth we need to know, whereas in the search we make for truth by the exercise of private judgment we are thrown into perpetual doubt or a maze of conflicting opinions which cannot be settled in such liberty and only vex the truth by close investigation. This plea, which has imposed upon the simple and the prejudiced so long, is a bundle of arrogant assumptions begging every question it proposes and hushing every question we ask. It assumes what no exercised conscience will ever concede

—that God has committed infallible tuition to fallible men, superseding the use of his own word and the agency of his Spirit in spiritual knowledge. Revelation says nothing of any great teacher but Christ himself, who is "the way, the truth and the life," and of the Church existing before he came in the flesh it says, "Christ loved the church and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it, with the washing of water by the word." Through all the ages, old and new, the atonement of Jesus alone suffices to cover infirmities of the Church as well as of individual members, and the baptismal affusion for this purpose can be effectual "by the word" without the priest. Reason finds no analogy to justify, or even color, the precedence of an institute for teaching what men know nothing about independently of its existence. Tradition itself confutes the claim and uniformly exhibits the Church apart from the word of God, in the hands of the people, as a cloud of darkness, taking away the key of knowledge, and so hindering men from entering the kingdom of heaven.

Besides, this antecedent position of the Church in Christian erudition gives no thread of escape from conflict of opinions in a labyrinth of speculation walled and subterraneous. What she is and where she is and how she came to such ascendency are questions never settled in the contentions of history. Two large divisions of nominal Christendom, Greek and Roman, are separated from each other still in disputing the claim of supremacy in Catholicism, and within the fold of the latter—near to us for observation, and called Western, or Latin—we can find in her own annals and see in our own streets a diversity of sect or sodality, male and female, greater than all the divisions of Protestant Christianity. We

read of Augustinians, Benedictines, Carthusians, Cistercians, Clunincensians, Dominicans, Franciscans, Jansenists, Jesuits, and quarreling among themselves with more bitter animosity than ever did evangelical divisions of Lutheran and Reformed branches respectively; and the more frivolous the distinctions, the more spiteful the fight, which all the fear of a pope could not repress. Bossuet's *Variations* has been surpassed by Edgar's *Variations of Popery.* The conclave, the council, the university, and the emperor have never yet agreed quiescently on the current legitimacy at Rome, and yet these are all factors in supporting that school.

Succession, however, in this claim of prior teaching, between the learner and the lesson, to dictate before assimilating truth is yet more distracted in searching its line and digging for buried links which history has lost and tradition asserted. The fossils found are all, of course, without those articulations of life which first and quickly decay. The mode, the man, the time, the place, the means and the intention which belonged to every coronation of a pontiff, investiture of a bishop and ordination of a priest must be recovered and assured before the soul is safe on this vain assumption of teaching, which is accompanied with no revealed truth in the hands of a learner to test its soundness and give it authority in learning. Here, of course, a deep and shoreless sea of conjecture will drift opinion without helm or compass and without end. Surely apostolical virtue never embarked on such succession or adventured on such waves.

We are to study the Church, therefore, as a part of revealed truth, and not merely as the depository, the interpreter, the expedient and the missionary of truth. It

is all these, indeed, because the word of God has appointed it in such relations; but the same appointment has embodied all these uses and the leading features of its organization and its proportionate value as a doctrine in the same symmetry of ordination that has made revelation complete and all-sufficient in its provisions for the salvation of men. There is no unchurching in this completeness of any variety preferred to ours by any branch of true evangelism, for just as the doctrines are held with charity the Church is, in our system. Infallibility is left out and utterly disclaimed. Strong denominational convictions, when well enlightened, are strong enough to stand rejoicing in the truth when bearing all things, believing all things, hoping all things and enduring all things in the great co-operation to which we are called. Even visible and organic unity is near when our camp is entrenched within the lines of inspired revelation. Outside of these, on the open campaign of contingent influences and human contrivance, we cannot even hope to be organically one, however vast the importance of attempting it may be; and to submit for a basis of external union a tradition which is not divine, a relic of unreformed, or half-reformed, Christianity, calling it apostolic because it is old, is to postpone the unity wished for with increased aversion wherever God's word is known as the supreme directory.

We do not undervalue church history when thus finding church government in the Scriptures alone. Its eventfulness is a great help on our path in fulfilling prophecy and depicting for a lamentation the backsliding of primitive faith and order from the apostolic model to Jewish hierarchy and pagan superstition. And its development of periods—first in the Athanasian soundness

of theology which vindicated the absolute divinity of Him who is our Head, and next the Augustinian breadth of church-membership in the salvation of parents and children alike by absolute grace, and next the "purpose and grace which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began," making justification by faith without the works of the law the article of a standing or falling Church in the soteriology of the Reformation. All the historical settlements contribute help and lend facility of peculiar advantage to the study of ecclesiology, and especially the department of governmental polity. This last is "the present truth" in which nearly all the unsolved problems of Christianity are to be found, and progressive theology must here turn back to the Bible for a better start again than records of history or consensus of creeds can ever give it in advance.

Not only time, but place also, will aid our study in this department. The great analogies of civil polity in this republic have been reciprocal indeed and borrowed largely from the antecedent model made in the Jerusalem Chamber at Westminster, with the Barrier Act in Scotland appended. The general government of this nation and the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church went into action at the same time without any union between them other than the same principles of representation on which they had been reared together, in freedom alike from monarchical and hierarchical oppression. However diverse in their contemplated origin —the one coming from Christ alone, and the other from numerous constituencies of the people—they meet, with singular identity, in representative government, showing that representation, like our only Mediator, is both human and divine.

The total separation between Church and State, which all our constitutions require; the complexity of aspect and interaction, at once tribal and central, particular and general, State and nation, a constellation of sovereignties, each one distinct in sphere and all revolving round a common orb, the will of the governed representatively expressed,—these are with us ever to be studied as both sacred and secular in their importance. The balance of power, in its three branches of legislative, judicial and executive authority, is different on the sacred side, where the judicial in great measure absorbs the other two, which are a divine code unalterable by man and a spiritual enforcement only moral in the execution. The resemblance and the variety—both so familiar and so venerated for the sake of our fathers, who won them as a heritage for us—invite us to the contemplation as patriotic ministers of the gospel. Social science, bodies politic, infidel confederacies and spasms of anarchy demand our attention as ecclesiastical students, now and here, engaging an ardor of discrimination and opportunities of making it which are without a parallel among the ages and the nations. And surely Christian sociology—"the keys" for all systems, the standard for all comparisons—should be studied well in the grant, the authority, the relations and the scope of an organization which vital piety has always found a fitting habiliment of truth as it is in Jesus.

CHURCH GOVERNMENT.

CHAPTER I.

THERE IS A FORM GIVEN.

"IT is absolutely necessary that the government of the Church be exercised under some certain and definite form," says our own Constitution. An absolute necessity must have been provided for by Him who gave the Church existence and engaged to make her catholicity "perfect and entire, wanting nothing." Unity in variety is the creation of grace as well as goodness in all the work of redemption. When we agree to differ, the platform of this agreement must be fixed—all the more as difference preponderates in the separation from oneness. If nothing be fixed in fundamental tie, if no form in substance can be found as ballast on the ocean of time, there is no historical Church to be seen, and fragments only bestrew the waste around us. We steer between opposite extremes. We shun as a mountain of ice that huge infallibility which curses departure in any variation, and we avoid with equal concern those floating wrecks which come from what had been contrived without a model ascertained in God's word and approved by the experience of ages.

The divine right we recognize in church government is a right of the people to govern themselves by an

authorized representation of God to man in preaching and of man to God in praying; but on the side of the people imperfection will always make a diversified conformity, and this diversity should not make division, and will not if we fairly appreciate the essential features of that norm which God has given us in revelation. The contingencies of circumstance, the stages of culture in its progress, the varieties of taste among sincere believers, tradition, habit, and even love of change, may justify peculiarities in minute details of worship and service of discipline, so that any kind of polity may be folded in true catholicism which does not repress the energies of Christian life with mere manacles of organism, nor unchurch the mystical body of Christ wherever it is not called by a particular name.

That a standard which may thus comprehend many in one must have been given us by the Head of the Church himself, instead of being left to our own wisdom to frame, we argue *a priori*—

1. Because it must be positive rather than conventional in its appointment. Such only can withstand the aggression of any false method in fanaticism, superstition or spiritual despotism. The neutral or negative alone, however free and voluntary it may be, does yield at length to the pretensions of arrogance. A late writer on church polity opposed to any claim of "divine right" in the sanction of his postulates affirmed that within the diocese of a New England prelate two hundred and seven of the two hundred and eighty ministers of that region were conformed, and had been from Congregational churches, calling for serious inquiry on this and similar facts. But from the standpoint of our view the explanation is obvious. The tradition of prelacy is too

strong for the freedom of independency. The positive, though even false in form, will prevail against indifference by dint of assertion and persistence alone. The only premises on which arrogance will break must be divine formations. Life, duration, triumph, are here because they are given by inspiration of God along with gospel truth and a part of this truth—its aptitude, its machinery, its vehicle and its appreciative embodiment.

2. We argue also from the character of God as a God of order. He hath set our Head "upon his kingdom to order it and establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever," and we may well presume that some constitution of order is meant in the administration of such a trust, given to his people and not left to their uninspired autonomy. Order in all nature is his "first law." Whether we look abroad upon the symmetry of creation at large, or at home on the smallest arrangement of his hand, we see regulation designed, both mediately and immediately, by himself. And can we believe that he would build the most favored construction of his hands with accident and confusion allowed, as men left to themselves have always built toward heaven since they were confounded on the plains of Shinar? If we believe that "the Word" in constructing earth and heaven by the simple fiat of his power would consult with such conspicuous care for the outward form and exact relation of all the parts, must we not conclude that the same supremely prudent Architect has been careful in proportion to provide some definite outline for that visible government which required more than his wisdom and power, even the shedding of his blood, to found it, and for which this wide creation is but a transitory platform?

3. The same is presumed from the character of Christ as Mediator. "Head over all things to the Church," says the apostle Paul, in strains of adoration. This administration of that providence which governs the world means a model ordained in the Constitution of the Church for all other forms of government to resemble, promote and cherish with the resources of all. It is a beacon to be seen, a banner to be displayed, a light to be followed. This objective pattern, which must be all these through all ages, could never be symbolized by man without the form of it being shown upon "the mount" of revelation. Otherwise, the Pauline aphorism would be reversed: "He is Head over the Church to all things else" in subordinate and subservient influence—to make divine right for kings and infallible papacy for prelates. The normal dignity of our "Lawgiver" is effaced. Instead of Christ we shall have a Constantine to model the Church after the fashion of his empire and make her the tool of tyrants and the guild of politicians through every age.

The supremacy of mediatorial enthronement forecasts the future of all administrations, and no visible necessities of heredity, environment or succession exist to modify her features which were not foreseen and provided for by Him who changes not and who gives to her a perpetuity lasting as his own. There must be, therefore, some organic law—or, at least, organizing principles—found in his word to antagonize and "overturn" the fabrications of men which obstruct the progress of his kingdom. We cannot resign the prior and mighty influence of a divine polity on the liberty of men, nor admit, without a treasonable insubordination to the Head, that his Church may become as readily the

handmaid of corrupt and despotic rule as of well-regulated freedom.

4. The reciprocal influence of forms on principles and principles on forms which we know in the history of human affairs is another point presumed in our argument here as we contemplate the kingly office of Jesus. He who is "the truth" must be the author of all that is true in form as well as in doctrine, for these have always been observed as inseparable. The sacraments were corrupted and justification by faith was lost in the development of hierarchy. Never did usurping despotism more speedily spoil the spirit of a governed people, and eradicate the sentiments of true liberty and justice, than did this overshadowing despotism of the priest subdue and exile from the Church right views of truth and holiness. Everything in her system that elevates the man hides the Saviour. The very name of priest in the sacerdotal sense—never given to ministers of the gospel in the New Testament, and only imported from the ruins of Judaism in the second century—introduced the notion of altar and sacrifice continued, and this corrupted the doctrine of sacraments, turning "remembrance" to immolation and seal to sacrifice in the absurdities of a missal. It were easy to show at length in the light of history how prelatical forms produced anti-Christian doctrines and led a declining Church to admixtures of Jewish and pagan ritual for the "untempered mortar" with which the sacerdotal fabric was built.

Equally detrimental to the soundness of saving truth, and even the liberty with which Christ has made us free, is the opposite and comparatively unhistorical extreme of anarchy in church government, claiming that no polity is given in the Bible, and that expediency is all

we have by divine right for any constructure of ecclesiastical form. Observation assures us that false doctrines grow up like a thicket in all such ungoverned localities, and that churchly communism will choke even its own freedom with vapors of the worst intolerance. The reasonable mean betwixt both extremes must be that our divine Headship has fixed, without vibration toward either extreme, a groundwork, at least, on which we are to build a consistent superstructure, and finish it only with becoming details which may be properly different in different places.

5. Explicit appointment of God in the Old-Testament Church adumbrates fairly divine authority for the formations ascertained in the New. The New-Testament Church is like the Old in being a visible kingdom as well as invisible. Determinate shape in the one presumes the same in the other. The enlarged dimensions and more spiritual nature of the New will dispense with minute regulations and alleviate the fault of variations from the form prescribed, but they enhance the necessity of some constitutional norms given by the divine Founder of both dispensations. We can readily perceive how governments merely human will dispense with minute legislation when the nation becomes more enlightened and virtuous, and must do so as the national territory is extended; but we see just as readily that corresponding to the generalization of law and constitution for many provinces and diverse inhabitants will be the need of fixedness and sacredness in the polity which remains to comprehend all.

Look at the difference between the constitution of a particular State and that of the general government under which we live. The latter is much more simple

and comprehensive—not merely because the objects to be attained are not all the ends of government in our complex system, but because of the wide variety of people and interests included under its authority. Yet in proportion to the comprehension and fewness of its articles must be their precise interpretation, in view of the superlative import. Legislation by the State often buries a constitution from our sight, and we sometimes yield to a State Legislature the scope of a British Parliament to make law and constitution both in our acquiescence. But not so with the Constitution of the United States: the wider its purview, the more transcendent its importance. The conflict of parties, the jealousy of sections, the floods of immigration, the diversity of races, the spread of territory,—all enhance the sacredness and establish with the utmost precision this great organic law.

Here we have analogy enough to presume a divine constitution for the visible Church of New-Testament times. If when the limits of the Church were a solitary nation the form of her government was ordained with awful sanction by her Head, now, when she is expansive as the globe, embracing in her mission every kindred, nation, tongue and people, must we not have a similar economy provided by the same adorable Supremacy? A formulary of organism it is which threads together all dispensations with its first principles of government, suiting all times and progress and expansion, confronting antagonisms with charity—which "beareth all things"—without compromise of right, and embracing kindred varieties of form with a patience that ever waits for the ultimate assimilation. It is entirely gratuitous, therefore, to conclude, with Neander

and others, that because the New-Testament Church is enlarged and spiritual in her nature she may be loose and fluctuating and various in her outward structure. They seem to forget that she is visible as well as spiritual in her enlargement, and must therefore abide by the laws of visibility wherever it is found in the dominion of God and his Son—form and figure impressed authoritatively by the Hand that gave it existence.

These implications of *a-priori* argument lead us now to intimations of Scripture that a form of government for the Church has been revealed as well as presumed from the primary teaching of true religion. The revelation of Messianic prophecy in the Old Testament will naturally be accepted as the best of evidence on the subject. "The law and the prophets" are familiarly diverse in drift, though one and the same in their final cause. Therefore we have the force of concession as well as emphasis when we find the two gospel-prophets of old phrasing the personal glory of Christ and the structure of his ecclesia to come in terms which are almost technically political and architectural. Thus Isaiah (ix. 6, 7, already cited): "The government shall be upon his shoulder," etc.; also (chap. xxxiii. 20–22), "Look upon Zion, the city of our solemnities; thine eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation, a tabernacle that shall not be taken down; not one of the stakes thereof shall ever be removed, neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken. But there the glorious Lord will be unto us a place of broad rivers and streams; wherein shall go no galley with oars, neither shall gallant ship pass thereby. For the Lord is our judge, the Lord is our lawgiver, the Lord is our king; he will save us."

This remarkable density of tropes, municipal, nomadic,

nautical, military and governmental, must be a prediction of something visibly formed in the future of a visible Church: "Look upon Zion;" "thine eyes shall see," etc.—not the eyes of the seer himself only, but of the people addressed in every age. Of course the spiritual protection, safety and permanence of the Church invisible must be implied, but this cannot be all these various figures intend, nor even the first in fulfilment. The rule of interpretation is that a good temporal sense must be found, if possible, before we annex the spiritual sense, if there be any. Interpreting is not spiritualizing alone, nor chiefly. The latter may be imagination without limit; the former is the exercise of common sense by the tongue of the learned. We may well conjecture that common sense will not surrender the text of this magnificent prophecy to the mystical dreams of a coming Church without body to "look upon" or "eyes" in herself to see the incorporation here delineated, and the marvel of "a tabernacle that shall not be taken down," which never could be seen, before the advent of Christ in the flesh, and the foundation laid by "apostles," as well as "prophets," with him as Headstone of the corner. In the sense of invisible catholicity the Church never was, and never can be, as a tent to be taken down and removed with its cords and stakes, in the nomadic figure: it is unchangeably fixed as the purpose of God himself. She is graven on the palms of his hands, and her walls are continually before him. "The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his." It must, therefore, be a visible corporeity of the Church in well-adjusted organism that is foretold here as the ultimate establishment on earth (Ezek. xliii. 11, 12): "Show them the form of the house and the

fashion thereof, and all the forms thereof, and all the ordinances thereof, and all the forms thereof, and write it in their sight, that they may keep the whole form thereof, and all the ordinances thereof, and do them." The redundancy of form, fashion, ordinance, in the singular mention of this prophecy must emphasize the importance of some future polity for the Church conformed to a pattern or principles of organization given by divine inspiration.

A consensus of commentary from opposite sides of us may well supersede further annotation here. Bishop Patrick says: "These words may import that the model of God's temple here set forth is but a pattern of heavenly things, as Moses' was, and a type of that pure Church built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ being the chief corner-stone; which we may hope God will in due time restore. And in the mean season it is the duty of all good Christians, according to their abilities, to inform themselves and others what is the pattern, form and fashion of this true Church of God, in order to reform all those deviations which have been made from it." On the other hand, Dr. Gill says: "Here is the prophet personating the apostles of Christ, who delivered out the form of a gospel Church-State to the believing ones far superior to that they had been in, and into which they entered—or, rather, personating the ministers of the word in the latter day, showing to the Christians of these times the order, worship and discipline of a pure gospel-Church, who have been greatly deficient in their observance of them, and which is the work and business of gospel-ministers to do as well as to preach the doctrine of the gospel."

Scholiasts like these—one a hierarch in the Church of England, of whom Burnet said, "He was an honor to the Church and the age in which he lived," and the other a Baptist Independent who has never been excelled for learning and piety in his denomination—should lead us to search the Scriptures with at least hypothesis ahead for the leading features of a form divinely given. The search of Scripture which our Lord enjoined will, of course, include the inspired record of his own words during his ministry on earth. His errand here in the flesh being to fulfil the prophecies which went before upon him as the substance of all that had foreshadowed him, the only priest that ever lived to mediate and atone, an advent rather to supersede and abolish institutional forms which were "handwriting of ordinances" that were against the liberties and best welfare of men,—it was not "expedient" for him to construct a new visible Church not yet gathered, and to be gathered and organized by the Spirit of God, as of old actuating and guiding his disciples to continue a house of prayer and instruction "for all people."

And yet "never man spake like this man" the first principles of ecclesiastical formation. The union of Church and State was virtually disestablished for ever by the memorable declaration, "My kingdom is not of this world." Even the formative force of this negation is wonderful when fairly applied in its corollary to nearly all the historical churches of Christendom. Separate the accretions of State polity from time to time, the ambitions of rank, the intolerance of tyrants, the turbulence of revolution, the greed, the craft, the pride and the servility entailed by such corruption, and how different would be the body and form of ecclesiasticism to the eyes of men

and angels! Church history would be to all generations the chronicle of grace and beauty, instead of being annals of debasement and revolting inconsistency.

Another negation of those gracious lips should level inequality of rank within the commonwealth he came to seek and save, giving to the social system a brotherhood of man, both parity of ministers and parity of people, entailing a polity which would make a priesthood of the race and a virtual protest for ever against ambitious pride of rank in the governments of men. Matt. xx. 25–28: "Ye know, that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them: but it shall not be so among you; but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister, and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant." (See also Mark x. 42–48.) These first principles, emphatically uttered by our Lord, were his nuncupative will to faithful hearers about the formal disposition of his inheritance, which he was about to redeem with his precious blood. And we shall see what a germ they were in a sequel of development by his apostles, who found nothing to be added but what was to be derived legitimately from premises and warrants contained in divine words before they were commissioned.

After the apostles entered upon their great work of witnessing for the ascended Saviour and writing out the doctrines of his grace for all generations to come, the features of church form are all indicated as divinely given by our Lord himself. Even the minute diversities of manifestation peculiar to that initial period are mentioned as given of God by the use of a Greek word

(ἔθετο) which undoubtedly means appointment and constitution by the sovereign authority: "He hath set in the Church," etc. (See 1 Cor. xii. 28.) "Governments" are distinctly mentioned, as "set" in the Church by divine appointment. And that no rigid exactness in government, without regard to the circumstances and effects in administration, can be intended, the apostolic ministry were authorized to govern themselves by a sound expediency in view of the benefit to be obtained and injury to be avoided. Yet no expedient of man's devising and wisdom of inspired—and still less uninspired—observation or experience should dare to alter the main features of that system which God "hath set" in the Church—a plural number of elders in each particular church. Inspiration makes that plural "governments." Popery and prelacy would say "government." Monopoly, from the diocesan to the pontiff, is the setting of man if not in revolt or apostasy, yet surely in departure from divine constitution and words of legislation by Christ and his apostles.

It was fairly settled in that long controversy concerning "things indifferent" which greatly agitated churches of the Reformation, that nothing can be so regarded which has either precept or example bearing on it in Scripture. The *jus divinum*, or divine right, obtained from such a source will be obligatory according to the comparative importance of what is sanctioned and the certainty with which the warrant is interpreted. Forms and modes are secondary to doctrines in importance, and uncertain gloss upon the text is inferior in its claim on the conscience; so that no strength of Bible proof will permit our imperfect knowledge to unchurch other varieties of organism and usage, or claim for our own more than the

advantage of better edification for the soul and greater animation of Christian life. Such advantage, however, is immense. When "we see through a glass darkly" and know that "the time is short" and the call imperative, divine formations made ready for us in the word are like the sling of David in proof, and prudence will find them always to be the quickest and safest in armor and outfit.

The want of explicitness, express and exact delineation, in what we quote from the word of God can be no presumption against the pertinence of its authority in the case, but rather the contrary. For this accords with that relative inferiority of form which belongs to the nature of our faith. If the warrant for a Presbyterian polity had been given with the precision and stateliness of a formal constitution, in the language of analysis, while the doctrines we profess were left as they are, in the language of synthesis, to be laboriously gathered into symbol by rigor of the understanding and charity of the heart combined, our whole system had been the reverse of what it is. Instead of being a religion of great principles, ever expanding with fresh power, it would have been, like the traditions it has exploded, a fixed directory of particulars, without versatility or adaptation to the progress and change appointed alike to the Church and the world. The correspondence we trace between the plenary light of doctrine and the fainter light of form gives to the latter an authority which is all the more binding because it has reason and proportion in its place on the pages of revelation. Modesty of pretension will never prejudice a claim when the trial is fair. Because in the vagueness of its hints it disclaims to be of equal moment with the truths which save the soul, we are to admire it the more

and strive to establish it over the whole extent of its legitimate claims.

But, after all, the insufficiency of Scripture to give us divine right for any particular form has been greatly overstated, and it becomes us here and now to review briefly the points made and proved at Westminister, and approved by the American Church, as a formative series which knits together in one, more and more, the different bodies entitled to share it as a good inheritance from their fathers.

1. We have divine right for anything that is explicitly commanded in the Bible. The whole warrant of the gospel comes to us with such indorsement: "This is his commandment, that we should believe on his Son Jesus Christ." When "the work of the law written in their hearts" was tabulated by revelation on Sinai, it became a formula of command requiring by divine right our obedience in heart and deed for ever. There is no release from perpetual obligation to the commands of Scripture unless the dispensation to which they belong was evidently transient in its nature, or the circumstances in which they were given obviously abnormal or preparatory. Thus the whole burden of express direction which we read in the detail of Levitical rites and the judicial ordinances of ancient Israel, though with emphatic solemnity it be said of each, "This shall be an ordinance for ever," binds us no longer, unless by fair exegesis and New-Testament light we find particular injunctions which belong to the code of moral obligation. So also with rare and singular commands on extraordinary occasions, interspersed through all the times of preternatural dealing with the Church, Old Testament and New; as when Abraham was ordered to sacrifice

Isaac, and the Israelites were told to ask jewels of their oppressors, and the first preachers to provide nothing for their own sustenance, though sent to inhospitable homes, and the primitive elders to anoint the sick with oil in the name of the Lord. Whatever principles of obedience may be hinted by such exceptional injunctions, the special form of them is not binding upon us.

Precepts in Scripture which do not pertain to an obsolete dispensation nor peculiarity of uncommon occasion largely shape the visible Church. Organized as a missionary society, her form is the creation of a command from the lips of her Saviour: "Go, teach all nations." Built for the celebration of ordinances, institutional precepts counted the number and prescribed the formulas of these: "The like figure whereunto even baptism;" "Do this in remembrance of me." Gathered into visible assemblies like the folds of a shepherd, the visible faith, diligence, watchfulness and care of ministers all originate in commands of Scripture. Tended by a non-producing body of men whose work and labor of love are spiritual and not carnal, the worshiping assemblies are explicitly commanded to give this order a liberal maintenance out of their carnal things, thus making a formal distinction between ministers and people. 1 Cor. ix. 14; Gal. vi. 6. These visible folds may not be faithfully cared for by the hireling shepherd or the flock may wander away from the pastures enclosed, and many another kind of mischief may befall the one or the other, and the whole interest requires conservation by discipline. This also is performed by divine command. Tit. iii. 10; Rev. ii. Ministers are too few, and they die; successors are needed now and always; and these are not born, as the Levites were, but are called afresh from every tribe

and in every generation. And this call, the preparation, the probation, the investiture,—all are matters and methods of express injunctions in Scripture. 1 Tim. v. 22; 2 Tim. ii. 2, etc. In short, the explicit commands of the Bible respecting alike the visible constructure and outward arrangements would, if connected in one view, make up the outline of a system that is complete in visible form.

2. Implicit or constructive commands are equally binding. In the precepts of the Decalogue negative injunctions forbidding sins are fairly construed as commanding the opposite virtues and duties, and such as forbid the outward grossness of the act prohibit with equal force of authority the inward disposition or incentive to the act. Referable to the Church, visible and invisible, are many such constructive injunctions, and what seems to be an occasional and minute direction becomes a broad commandment. Thus the right to have our infant children baptized because they are born within the pale of the visible Church is fairly derived from an unrepealed behest to ancient Abraham, as well as an express extension of the family promise in the words of Peter on the day of Pentecost. And many an explicit command bears to us a broad implication by way of necessary means to the end it enjoins. When Timothy is commanded to "lay hands suddenly on no man," there is fairly devolved a caution upon all succeeding evangelists engaged in ordination to formulate instruction, preparation, time and trial at the threshold of the Christian ministry. When the apostle requires expressly that men be first proved and found blameless for the office of deacon, there is implied, of course, the necessity of similar procedure before the older and higher

office of elder is assumed. When our Saviour bids an aggrieved and complaining party to "tell it to the church," the implication is fair that he means a bench, and not a bishop, as the ultimate tribunal of redress.

3. Divine acts as well as precepts have had conspicuously a formative force on the Church in all ages. Ceremonial institutes of burdensome ritual were abolished by the act of Christ coming in the flesh to fulfil all righteousness. Offices in the Church, in all varieties of form, needed for continuance and for the first time and for all time, were conferred by the act of Christ ascending to his Father and "receiving gifts for men." To this day an ascension-gift from him is the constitutional foundation of any proper office in the Christian Church. Acts of the people in making officers are null without special recognition of a qualifying gift bestowed by the act and influence of God himself, and the calendar of New-Testament offices reducible at his pleasure with the ceasing of need for this and that office mentioned in Scripture may be restored more or less according to the acts of Christ in the ceaseless vigilance and care with which his administration is conducted.

4. Divine approbation is another source of warrant for visible feature in the Church of God. The church of Ephesus had such commendation for not enduring the wicked within her, detecting false ministers and hating the deeds of the Nicolaitans; and it is fair to infer from this that the Church is authorized with divine right to keep herself pure and to exercise a searching and rigid discipline upon her own members, rebuking the disorderly and expelling the reprobate. When the apostle commends for double reward "the elders that rule well," in distinction without preference from those "who labor

in word and doctrine" (1 Tim. v. 17), we infer a divine right in making ruling elders a distinct order of office.

5. Scripture examples. The imitable pattern of Christ and the conduct of holy men as they were led and instructed by the Spirit of God must be considered as formative alike of compact and conduct in the "doctrine and fellowship" of apostolical churches. The apostle Peter, himself "an elder," in giving direction to the "oversight" by presbyters who succeeded him, bids them not to be "lords over God's heritage," but "ensamples to the flock." The apostle Paul, who could say, "So ordain I in all churches," would say with variety of emphasis. "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ;" "Be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample;" "Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you." The peculiar abundance of such injunctions, together with the fact that large portions of Scripture, Old Testament and New, are declaratively given to conformate the body of Christ, both visible and invisible, constrains the inference that no polity is good and true which does not copy its features mainly from the models of transactions revealed in the word of God.

The binding precedent in revelation may be discriminated easily. There is not an action revealed in the Bible whose moral quality is not written beside it; so that the exercised disciple may follow with instinctive appreciation, that rarely infatuates him with the letter. Sinfulness and singular eccentricity are always obvious in sacred annals to the spiritual mind as we study their biography. We do not invoke punishment from heaven upon our persecutors because Elias called down fire upon

his. We may not punish without process of law the most atrocious criminals in Church or State, because Phinehas killed without trial the adulterous pair that were leading Israel to sin. We are not to design the extinction of our own lives in the patriotism which plots the destruction of enemies because Samson did so. We are not to keep aloof from honorable wedlock because Paul remained unmarried, nor seclude ourselves from the amenities of social life because John the Baptist lived in the desert and wore a leathern girdle, nor invade the rights of property with communistic Utopia because they "had all things common" at the spiritual effusion of Pentecost. Common sense would be distempered in the man who would find in the rarity of such examples a binding model, even though interpretation confounds him. If the act in question is agreeable to the word of God as a whole, is practicable now, suitable to present circumstances and in harmony with present providence, the example binds us; it is the will of God in our duty, divine right is our warrant and divine approbation is the reward of our following.

Thus, we are bound to imitate the apostles in baptizing women as well as men, and whole households on the profession of parental faith as well as that of adult members in particular. We are bound to follow them in meeting for worship on the first rather than the seventh day of the week, in memory of "the resurrection." We are bound to lay on the hands of the Presbytery without a prelate in ordaining candidates for office in the ministry. We are bound to connect in a common representation the churches of a populous community, in town or country, to be called *Church* in the singular number, as they called the churches of Jerusa-

lem and Antioch respectively, and also to summon general assemblies for the care of such collective ecclesia, as they did a council at Jerusalem, to decide on a reference from Antioch to settle disputes, to manage interests of great moment, and constrain with pastoral circular all the churches to accept the decrees of charity and wisdom, in the submission of amity and peace.

6. The light of nature itself is authorized in revelation to warrant many things for the framework and usages of the visible Church. Dim as this light may be, and inconclusive as its authority on the conscience must be when separated from the sources already mentioned, it has a sanction for all the inferences derived by right reason from Scripture premises of precept and example, and for all the congruities of manner and detail, that practical piety and enlightened sentiments of devotion would annex to the solid structure we find in the Bible. When we know that God is its author, and the glimmering of its ray might picture his "eternal power and Godhead" to the most benighted pagan, we must look for divinity in its beaming, and dignify the most minute proprieties of custom with a touch of the veneration which begins at the corner-stone of the edifice we build. It helps the Church alike to discipline the grossness of immorality at home, and the frivolities of fashion in the sanctuary. "A wise master-builder" was aided by this light in rebuking incest: "It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife." Again, to the same Corinthian church he quotes the instincts of nature on the subject of head-dress in their prayer-meetings: "Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man

have long hair, it is a shame unto him? But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her." In short, there is not one becoming function or mode or measure devised by spiritual men for edification at this temple, and believed to be consistent in letter and spirit with that main architecture which the Bible has drafted, that may not "look through nature up to nature's God" for his fiat and blessing.

"Doth not even nature itself teach" us that the servant is not greater than his lord, that the servants of the lowly Jesus, who came to minister and give his life a ransom for base and rebel men, should not be lords over the heritage of God, or be ministered to with distinguished titles and worshipful seats of high position in the house of their common Master? "Doth not even nature itself teach" us that prayer to God our Father should be the spontaneous expression of individual souls and individual congregations, represented by individual ministers, with the help of the Spirit and according to the varied conditions of time and place, instead of being petrified by tradition or bound up by cathedral canonicity of one generation for another until it becomes proper only by some new translation? "Doth not even nature itself teach" us that representatives should be chosen to act for the people in church communities as well as in other kind of society when it is impossible as well as inexpedient for them to act for themselves with intelligent decision? and that in such representation the majority should govern and the minority acquiesce in the Lord? and that when a partial or prejudiced judgment would trample on the rights of any church-member there should be constitutional provision for appeal to another tribunal of larger representation, other collective wisdom and exempt from

the local influence which had injured its cause where it originated?

All these things unsophisticated reason teaches by the light of nature, with or without the parallel lines of ordinance in Scripture, inasmuch as the Bible itself recognizes authority in such dictates for all that is auxiliary and supplemental to that consistency of outline which revelation authenticates. And all the sources of warrant now indicated for the system we teach are consentaneous and flow together, yet any one of them apart will sanction a feature in its own category. One part may be commanded, another construed, another exemplified, another implied in a revealed act or approbation of God, and still another may be subjoined by the wisdom of men, exercising common sense, with devout accord and pious conformity. We seek to unite them all in our view of the body we prefer, and, however scouted it may have been for its claim to divine right in the past, however broadened it may be in the charity which forgets itself while co-operating with others at present, and however much it may come behind others in figure and visible numbers now, we may well be sure of the ultimate rise and establishment of this form as "an eternal excellency, the joy of many generations."

CHAPTER II.

ECCLESIA.

THIS word, which is now transferred to English by dictionaries of our language, is of Greek original, and is defined by Brande, "The great assembly of the Athenian peoples, at which every free citizen might attend and vote." It is familiarly translated in our tongue by the word "church." This term also is of Greek derivation, and, as some say, from two words compounded, meaning "the house of the Lord." Others derive it from a Greek adjective—*κυριακός*, "pertaining to the Lord," a word twice used in the New Testament, the Lord's Supper and the Lord's Day. The earliest missionaries from Constantinople gave it to the Goths on the lower Danube, and these gave it indirectly to the Anglo-Saxons. "House of the Lord"—"church" in England, "kirk" in Scotland—was until the Reformation the name given to the building itself in which God was visibly worshiped. Then, by metonymy—the thing containing for the thing contained—this word began to designate the assembly of worshipers within the sacred walls. Yet the early translations of the Bible by Tyndale and Cranmer seem to have avoided this figurative use of the word, and used the term "congregation," not "church," where it now uniformly occurs. This later translation to mean the assembly within so quickly and

generally prevailed in the parlance of evangelized people that many scrupled to use the word any more as a name for the edifice, calling the latter "meeting-house." But now the term "church" is familiarly used in both senses.

Ecclesia, or church, in the sense of assembly, has a synonym in "synagogue," and was used for the most part by "the seventy" Greek translators to render a Hebrew word (קָהַל) which signifies a coming together by call, and, passing by the secular use of this word in Acts xix. 32, 39, 41, we may find in its application to Christian assemblies five distinct senses which it is important for us to note with careful scrutiny and candid research.

1. *A particular church or congregation meeting together in one place for the worship of God and the observance of his ordinances.* Acts xiv. 23. This church may be identical with a single family, or a few individuals of different families, in a private house. Col. iv. 15; Rom. xvi. 5. It may exist not only in a private conventicle, with but two or three met together, but also without formal organization. When Paul and Barnabas "returned" in their mission to "confirm" the souls of disciples, they "ordained elders in every church," the particular churches having apparently waited a while for such organization in order to discern proper men for the eldership.

2. *A number of particular churches in the same city or vicinity or country united in one ecclesiastical body.* When severally organized by the appointment of elders, they are collectively one in a Presbytery. We read of the church in the singular number at Antioch (Acts xiii. 1), at Jerusalem (Acts viii. 1), at Corinth (1 Cor. i. 2), while the sacred history constrains us to believe there must have been more disciples in each of these communities than could meet in one place for worship and instruction.

This collective sense, remarkably suggestive, is frequent and familiar.

3. *It means all the local churches and all visible communities of ecclesia which are extant on earth.* This general sense, inferable as progress from the expansion of local to provincial distinction, is found in Acts xv. 3, where Paul and Barnabas—commissioners from Antioch to Jerusalem—are said to have been "brought on their way by the church" as they traveled through Phenice and Samaria declaring to the brethren the conversion of the Gentiles. The hospitable facilities of travel indicated here were common over all the Christendom then to be seen, for the apostle speaks of it in connection with his contemplated journey into Spain (Rom. xv. 24) and his proposal to winter at Corinth. 1 Cor. xvi. 6. This indefinite extension of visibility, expressed in the singular number—"the church"—should be considered a distinct sense from the definite compactness of one community. In such general sense we see it used in 1 Tim. iii. 15, where, in allusion to the stone pillars on which imperial rescripts were published, the "church" is called "the pillar and ground of the truth."

4. *The church invisible, consisting of true believers effectually called—the whole society of faithful ones who are united to Christ by the indwelling of his Spirit and a living faith.* Acts xx. 28. Though visibility must be a predicate of the Church universal on earth, it is not essential in any one form, nor at all times in any form whatever, so far as social organism is in shape. We can have a distinct idea of the Church composed of a scattered and persecuted few whose meetings are disbanded, whose ordinances are suppressed and who even fail to recognize one another, as was the condition of witnesses in the dark

ages of a visible apostasy and bloody intolerance. We can extend our conception to the invisible universe—all space, and all time too—and include the first-born who are already written in heaven with the latest of sons and daughters yet to be called and justified. Nor does it embarrass the comprehension at all to dispense with formulas of every kind, doctrinal as well as ecclesiastical, universals as well as particulars; for the bond is personal union to Christ, so as to be incorporated as members of his mystical body, "the fulness of Him that filleth all in all."

This bond alone is viewless, and it is the whole of that ultimate invisibility into which some would simplify the entire conception of the Church. All else is visible. Visible persons compose it—not angels—visible fruits prove its existence, visible ordinances are its note and nourishment, visible bodies at the resurrection rise to the consummation of its glory. And the more conspicuous, palpable and all-engrossing it becomes, the more it reaches to the destination of its Founder and realizes the ultimate scheme of his own word and promise. The reality of union to Christ by faith will suffice to bring into the Church members who may have no Church-state in the eyes of men, nor valid ordinances, nor conscious communion of saints, nor even recognition by those who are lawfully commissioned to gather and feed the flock of Jesus Christ. On the other hand, there may be the tenure of a Church-state and warranted fruition of its benefits to some extent without actual conversion of the soul. The parent may have his family baptized and truly saved in the same visible relation, without having himself regenerated by any of its immunities, and to say that he is not really in the Church at all

because he is not savingly united to Christ by faith is as much a solecism as to say that a man is not a tenant of God's goodness in the ordinations of nature and providence because he has no loyalty of heart to God nor vital interest in him as the portion of his soul.

The distinction of the Church into visible and invisible is therefore not the same as into nominal and real, apparent and true, as many allege nowadays. The visible is actually and divinely instituted, as well as the invisible. The body of man was made, and made to be redeemed, by the Head of the Church, as well as his soul. The antiquity of its date (Acts vii. 38), the etymology of its name, its New-Testament record of indefinite continuance, the necessity of its platform as a place of transaction for the visible and the invisible together, "a tabernacle of witness" for "the Church in the wilderness,"—all admonish us against the radical simplification that would sink the seeming as if it were the same as the false, and find no refuge from the repellant visibility at Rome but in a mystic idea which would sublimate the organism of redeemed sons and daughters beyond the conditions of humanity, and make spirits only the subject of ecclesiastical administration, though the apostle would have the "whole spirit and soul and body preserved blameless" by such instrumentality "unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

With this moderation on the subject, we argue for the distinct existence of a spiritual body in the fulness of Christ composed of regenerated believers only, as a main sense of the Christian Church.

(1) The metaphors employed in Scripture to describe the Church mean this, beyond question, and metaphor goes deeper than definition always, though narrower on

the surface. She is the body of Christ (Eph. i. 23; Col. i. 18)—not visibly alone, but inwardly and vitally also, as the sympathies of a living body are intimate between the members with each other, and all of these with the head. So the apostle illustrates (1 Cor. xii. 27): "Now ye are the body of Christ and members in particular." Of course it is not so with merely formal professors. Again, she is called the spouse of Christ (Eph. v. 23; Rev. xix. 7), and surely false professors who would betray the Saviour with a kiss, and who may be found in the purest visibility of the Church on earth, cannot be included in such endearing and durable relation; for in this figure she is "arrayed in fine linen clean and white, and the linen is the righteousness of saints." Again, she is called a fold. John x. The sheep within it know the voice of the Shepherd and follow him, and he gives them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of his hand. We must not allow within such a fold those whom he says, even in a visible Church-state, "Ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep." And, once more, she is called a building of God. Eph. ii. 21; 2 Thess. ii. 4. Her foundation is Christ, her materials are "lively stones," her structure is so fitly framed together that every joint "supplieth strength," and her stability such that "the gates of hell cannot prevail against her." Individuals, therefore, whose faith is dead, whose foundation is on the sand and who are not built up for an habitation of God through the Spirit are not integral parts of such a building.

(2) The general description of her character purports the Church invisible as a frequent sense of the ecclesia. She is the object of an eternal decree of grace (1 Pet. i.

2; Heb. xii. 23), and includes, therefore, only those who are viewed with complacency by the infinite Mind. Her members are known by the inward condition of the heart: "He is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God." Rom. ii. 28, 29. Even her progress in the world as a kingdom is emphatically contrasted with the splendid visibility of old—the exodus, the march, the triumph, the establishment in Canaan. "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation. Neither shall they say, Lo here! or lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you." Luke xvii. 20. In accordance with this chief signification of the term in Scripture is the language of the Creed, that is held in superstitious veneration by those who reject the distinction of invisible: "I believe in the holy catholic Church;" "Faith is the evidence of things *not seen*." With Bellarmine and others, the Creed means, therefore, "I *see* the holy catholic Church, and therefore believe in her."

5. *A tribunal in the Church for the settlement of differences among brethren, to which is to be their ultimate appeal.* Matt. xviii. 17: "And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church; but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican." This tribunal could not mean the people in common of a particular church, for no such conventicle was then existing. It could not be considered proleptical direction for a Church of the future, for he says, "My Church," in the predictive sense; and here it is evidently some judicatory then familiar and practicable: "the Church." It cannot mean divulging to a community of Christian people in any sense the matter which

has failed of redress by private means; comparative privacy is continued to the last: "Let him be *unto thee*" (not the public) "as a heathen man," etc. No tribunal of gossip is the last resort of an aggrieved believer. And it has been a principle of Church discipline from the beginning, not to spread the knowledge of offences. We are, then, shut up to the synagogue, where there was a representative bench of elders, and where our Lord and his apostles resorted for patterns of teaching and ruling and adjudication by an eldership. It was the *collegium presbyterorum*, as Schleusner calls it, which is here called ecclesia. And with this great lexicographer agree a host of renowned interpreters, such as Calvin, Beza, Le Clerc, Campbell of Aberdeen and Edward Robinson of New York. *Συναγωγή* and *Ἐκκλησία* ("synagogue" and "church") are synonyms convertibly used in the Greek translation of the Old Testament and by the apostle James in the New. A judicial commission consisting of some two or three or more of the elders existed in this Church of the old economy, and these were the Church acting in a judicial capacity by representation. This would seem to be naturally the reference of our Lord in this place. Indeed, an exegetical necessity is averred in view of the next verse, and the whole context from the fifteenth verse to the end of the chapter. Dr. J. Addison Alexander in his *Commentary on Matthew* says, in the analysis of ch. xviii., that the subject of this portion is "the nature of Christian discipline or the divine law of censures and forgiveness." From all these considerations we may infer at least that a church court or judicatory is a distinct sense of the term "church" in the Scriptures.

These five different senses of "ecclesia" will never be

gathered into one definition of the Church. The visible Church may, indeed, comprehend four of them with logical precision, but the invisible cannot be contained in the same formula, either expressly or impliedly. And yet this we have seen to be a principal meaning of the word in Scripture. How the mixed, limited and countable, transient and liable to corruption and deformity, could be made identical and commensurate with what "no man can number," eternal in the past, present and future as the purpose of God himself, and incorruptible as the spirits of just men made perfect in heaven, or how the twain could be uttered in one breath and sentence of catholicism, is inconceivable. Like the concursus in theology of divine sovereignty and man's free will, we give it up in explanation. Of course we hold both conditions to be of divine ordination and explicable apart, but how they fit and blend and consist in relations exactly no one formulation could tell. Hence the wisdom of our Westminster Fathers, who were never excelled in the skill of definition nor exceeded in the compass of religious thought, has given us two definitions of the Church (1st, invisible; 2d, visible), both catholic, both biblical—viz.:

1. "The catholic or universal church, which is invisible, consists of the whole number of the elect, that have been, are, or shall be gathered into one, under Christ the head thereof; and is the spouse, the body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all."

2. "The visible church, which is also catholic or universal under the gospel (not confined to one nation as before under the law), consists of all those throughout the world, that profess the true religion, together with their children, and is the kingdom of the Lord Jesus

Christ, the house and family of God, out of which there is no ordinary possibility of salvation."—*Confession of Faith*, ch. xxv.

It is important for us to notice how much alike and how much unlike are these two classical formulas. They are similar in being "catholic and universal" since the advent of Christ, everywhere simultaneous, and yet distinct, both of them universal, and yet definitively separate—not two churches, and yet not one and the same, just as body and soul of a living man are not two persons, and yet not one nature. Both existed under the Old-Testament dispensation, but not alike universal and catholic save in the forecast of prophecy, adding the Gentiles to the visible Church. Both are gathered respectively by the call of God in his word and by the agency of his Spirit, but not alike in the vital efficiency of the latter. Both are divisible in reduction to units, yet neither of the units can be one and single, as an individual detached. For in the Church invisible a true member is plural essentially in being united to all others of the mystical body as surely as he is united to the Head by faith, and in the visible Church the unit has ever been and ever will be the family—two, "together with their children." Here we must quit analysis and relegate to mystery the depths of our subject: "This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church." When husband and wife—being two, and yet "one flesh"—can be expressed in one logical proposition without "and" or "if" in its terms, and compact in one predicate phrase the several qualities of each party, then only we may cease to double our definition of the Church and surrender as but shallow and superfluous the second definition which was voted at Westminster.

Moreover, should the first definition become catholic and exclusive, it would subvert the fabrics of all existing catholicism, Greek, Roman and Protestant, and supersede in great measure the study of any visible formation, making Church polity a thing of fancy or convenience, not only of inferior importance, but of no importance at all except for external history and lines of tradition. Besides, we must go back with it to the Old-Testament time and interpret in its light the ordinances and prophecies pertaining to the Church of the past as well as the present and future. If the true and ultimate idea of "Church" be the invisible only, then were the types of old but shadows of a shadow, adumbrating a great corporeity which has all figures blended in its substance, and yet is itself without figure and without even substance ever to be seen with the bodily eye. All that the Bible makes in form, before a visible organization of the Church on earth, are promises and incidents of worship, interspersed along the track of primeval history, without unity enough to be named at all, and of course to be defined, until a visible organization was made. It was in the family of Abraham that recipients of ecclesiastical promise—parents, children and proselytes together—were first gathered into the form of an organized church with the bond of a covenant and the seal of a sacrament. This visible church in one family was a unit, and has remained such in varieties of shape to this day. Through all subsequent descent, expansion, vicissitude, trial, triumph, exodus, backsliding and establishment it was the same one visible Church, though numbering diversities of shape in succession as many as denominations to be counted now in the true visible Church. So the proto-martyr Stephen said in sub-

stance, and would not have said if it had not been the mind of his Lord Jesus. Moses led that "Church in the wilderness" and gave it "the lively oracles" which he received from the Angel of God as a commission and trust to this visible Church through all generations, and the Messianic prediction of his lips—"A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren like unto me; him shall ye hear"—is replete with visibility. As surely as Moses was a man and not a myth, and the children of Israel were a congregation and not an idea, and inspired genealogies were history and not fable, and the advent of Christ himself at length was the birth of a child at Bethlehem and not a phantasm,—so surely is the "great mystery of godliness" confided to one visible Church through all ages of time.

So converge the prophecies of a future glory and expansion of the Church on earth (Isa. ii. 2): "The mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it." No metaphors of the visible and unity of the visible could be more striking. But we find in other places an emphatic identification of the same Old-Testament Church in pointing to her, impersonated in the singular number and with all sorts of personal pronouns, appropriating to one and the same visible body the promises of coming glory and enlargement: "My Spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever. Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.

For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising. Lift up thine eyes round about, and see; all they gather themselves together, they come to thee; thy sons shall come from far, and thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side. Then thou shalt see, and flow together, and thine heart shall fear, and be enlarged; because the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee." Isa. lx.

If such prophecies fail to indicate one visible Church of old becoming catholic and universal in "the time of reformation" and by the spread of the gospel, though fallible as ever even with superior light, mingled as ever with "the abundance of the sea" and "the forces of the Gentiles," hardly half of them converted truly—an aggregate of increase more spiritual without being more holy, more civilizing and philanthropic without being more circumcised in heart; if we must find a new Church in the New Testament, and that only in a germ of regeneration within each individual which no man can see or discriminate,—surely, then, we must forbear to look and only imagine as we proceed to investigate. The Old Testament and the New are sundered ecclesiastically if we have no distinct definition of the Church as visible to study in our scheme of revealed institution. And even the New-Testament history is all a parable if there be nothing literal in the mention of "Church." The term is indeed of mystical import in passages where the context compels us to spiritualize and contemplate the invisible, but so are the sacraments,

baptism and the Lord's Supper, occasionally used as metaphors of spiritual and unseen realities. And yet we consider the Friends to be in grave error, who reject the literal ordinances called by these names, because of the exceptional figurative sense which they prefer.

On the whole, we cling to the second as well as the first definition of "Church" in our Confession of Faith, and say in our abbreviation for this department, It is *a community separated from the rest of the world by a profession of faith in Christ, and observance of his ordinances.*

The Visible Ecclesia.

There can be no Church government without organization, of course, and, no functions of government being possible for man, as he is a member of the Church invisible, except only those of the Holy Ghost in the work of inward sanctification by his agency, we must consider only the outward policy of administration ordained for the visible Church under the New-Testament dispensation in pursuing discussions here. Three problems at the threshold require solution as far as it can be made in this world—the sectarian divisions which are painfully visible, the tests of unity by which we discern the true branches of our one olive tree, and the phenomenon of mixture, good and bad together, in the best as well as the worst of these visible branches.

I. Denominational distraction has always pertained to the visible Church, and has always been regarded as evil. "Great searchings of heart" among the tribal diversities in particular descent from the Father of the Faithful—for divisions of Reuben, envy of Ephraim, vexation of Judah and war of Benjamin—pictured what has followed wherever the Abrahamic covenant has broadened from

the family in his house to that ecclesiastical covenant fulfilled, in which he was to be "the father of many nations."

National names divide the visible Church, however closely ecclesiastic alliance may tend to unite the different bodies in sympathy. Tradition, creed, prejudice and fashion also divide her, and, in so far as the true churches compete with one another without charity and co-operation, the disunion is to be deplored as unseemly and inexcusable. But, on the other hand, divisions and subdivisions of the Christian name are not unmingled evil and reproach. They correspond with the forecast of prophecy and the findings of prophecy fulfilled in the gathering glory of the visible Church; and prophecy fulfilled is a main bulwark of Christianity. Count the triumphs of modern missions and survey the colors of light now diversified on the whole surface of this globe and contrasted with the dark which draped it when the century began. Give to every sect its own distinctive banner and let it wave, and to every language its own peculiar accent and let it speak the word of God; give to every form of government its throne for kings to be the "nursing fathers and queens the nursing mothers," or its constitution of republican freedom to suit the glorious liberty of the sons of God: all these, and many more diversities which mar the uniformity that man would see, enhance the beauty of realization upon every hand, although they multiply divisions of the one visible Church.

Again, diversities of organization suit the very nature of cultivated mind, which must have a freedom of choice among visible things and occasion to construct unity for each man's own judgment and taste from the contrariety

of materials in view. There is no unity found without numbers around it, and unity in variety seems to be the perfection of design through all the works of creation and providence. And why should "Zion, the perfection of beauty," be anything else than many in one for our eyes to behold? Instead of regretting to see the plural of other denominations crowding the settlements of our frontier, and especially its villages and infant cities, "rejoice and work righteousness" there, by strengthening your own stake and lengthening your own cords in co-operation with all others, that can be encompassed for that great end of the visible Church the salvation of souls. Herein is her unity manifest, and herein the apparent evil of division is turned to far greater good.

Another advantage of divisions in the visible Church is to gain the utmost of truth by witness-bearing: "Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord;" "Whereof we are witnesses," etc. Each division is produced by an emphasis—though exaggerated, probably—of some particular truth in doctrine, polity, ordinance, or even mode and manner of worship. For such a truth it lifts a banner and separates in work and warfare. The most complete establishment of the whole truth in any cause must be derived from the concurrent testimony of all diversities, and so important is it for exact ascertainment of the truth that judicial wisdom will seek diversity and seclude one witness from hearing another depone, to find by examination and cross-examination of all partisan extremes a rightly balanced conclusion of the truth. Fair analogy such conclusion is to the discovered unity of the visible Church for all its evangelical divisions, and the right procedure to attain it is co-operation rather than consolidation. Organic union is hardly ever effected

without a compromise of truth, more or less, and this can hardly be done without reducing that fulness of attestation to which the visible Church is called.

These and other considerations which will occur to reflecting minds are quite enough to content us with visible divisions in the one visible Church; but when witnesses fail to appear with others in the prosecution of a great cause, and refuse to co-operate in demonstrating the value of truth or holiness by their works in the world, a question arises about their standing in ecclesiastical recognition. Witnesses are not permitted to swear in court if they have sworn falsely before, and are not credible in making testimony when they are permitted without integrity of character as well as truthfulness to sustain what they affirm. And so among the bodies of the visible Church divided from others in preaching the gospel.

II. It is of much importance ecclesiastically to decide what is and what is not a true branch of the visible Church. "Notes of the true Church" has been a crucial topic ever since the great Reformation, and it is remarkable that these notes have been abridged in proportion to the increase of ecclesiastical bodies. The accession of unhistorical churches, Baptist, Brownist, Wesleyan and Quaker, has constrained abatement in the rigor of tests by the spiritual development of life in these Christian organizations. In the Scots Confession of 1560, John Knox, while discarding the Roman Catholic tests, expressly inlaid as follows the position of Calvin and his successors at the Genevan school, adopted as his own: "The notes, signs and assured tokens whereby the immaculate spouse of Christ Jesus is known from the horrible harlot the Kirk malignant, we affirm, are neither

Antiquity, Title usurped, lineal Descent, Place appointed, nor Multitude of men approving. . . . The notes, therefore, of the true Kirk of God, we believe, confess and avow to be: *First*, the true preaching of the word of God, in the which God has revealed himself to us. *Secondly*, the right administration of the sacraments, which must be annexed to the word and promise of God to seal and confirm the same in our hearts. *Lastly*, ecclesiastical discipline, uprightly ministered, as God's word prescribed, whereby vice is repressed and virtue nourished. Wheresoever, then, these notes are seen and of any time continue, be the number never so few above two or three, there, without all doubt, is the true Kirk of Christ, who, according to his promise, is in the midst of them—not that universal of which we have before spoken, but particular, such as was in Corinthus, Galatia, Ephesus and other places in which the ministry was planted by Paul, and which were of himself named the kirks of God. And such like we, the inhabitants of the realm of Scotland, professors of Christ Jesus, confess us to have in our cities, towns and places reformed."

All branches of the Reformation, Lutheran and Reformed, agree with the Scots Confession to reject the Church of Rome as no true Church of Christ. Though Calvin made a distinction between the whole and conjectural parts of this great apostasy, as we see in his *Institutes*, conceding that it was possible to deserve the name of "church" in certain sodalities of Romanism, like that of the Jansenists a century after his day, yet, as Rome would never tolerate a branch in her Catholicism exceptionally evangelical in doctrine and spirit, but requires all or nothing in her ecclesia, he rejects with

totality, absolute as she is arrogant, her claim to be a true Church at all: "Because those marks which we ought chiefly to regard in this controversy are obliterated, I affirm that the form of the legitimate Church is not to be found either in any one of their congregations or in the body at large." (See the last sentence of his admirable chapter on the subject, *Institutes*, Book 4, chap. 2.) It should be observed just here that Calvin and Knox were the first in Christendom since the days of Constantine to particularize the local assembly as a church having distinct and substantive right to the name of "church." Though in every land the mere edifice might be called by metonymy a church when dedicated to Christian worship, yet the ecclesia itself was always a generalization signifying, even in Lutheran and Anglican literature, only the national idea, and perhaps the provincial at times, and in Greek and Roman ecclesiasticism the universe, indefinitely catholic. A particular ecclesia was first denominated "church-kirk" in Scotland. The union of Church and State on the one hand and Puritan mightiness on the other, the former tending to national breadth and the other to local independence, actually countervailed each other enough to secure the sacred appellation apart, for every congregation of worshipers in Great Britain.

The three marks of a true Church laid down by Knox have been virtually reduced to one, by the prevailing sentiment of the present age among evangelical churches. The Baptist denomination, however, and that of the Friends called "Quakers," occupy anomalous positions. They are not fairly comprehended in our definition of the visible Church—"all those throughout the world that profess the true religion, together with their chil-

dren." It is in baptism that we make profession—*baptizari est profiteri*, said Ursinus; and so say all historical churches that accept the old ecclesiastical covenant in the family of Abraham. This covenant has never been repealed nor superseded, but was proclaimed anew on the day of Pentecost, illustrated in household baptism by the apostles, and is manifestly now being fulfilled in the gathering of the Gentiles to inheritance with the Jews, in family institute and a covenant seal on its entirety, according to the volume of inspired prophecy. It is not "together with their children" that Baptists are baptized. Family faith is only adult and individual, without sponsorial margin. The family covenant, always conditional in its promise, they do not distinguish at all from the covenant of grace, which in its nature is unconditional to us. When Abraham had faith for his children and had the covenant seal administered to them, "it was accounted to him for righteousness." Not that he was justified merely on account of his own personal faith, but that he was legally reckoned righteous by the grace of God in the good obedience of entire consecration, having his whole household share alike in the symbol and seal of family religion.

Distant from us ecclesiastically are the Quakers also in the application of the second test, "a right administration of the sacraments," "the visible word," to be seen and taken and handled. The mysticism of this denomination, disparaging, if not discarding altogether, external ordinances of religion, including to a certain extent even the objective Scriptures, may so exhibit in life the things signified in the sacraments and taught in the Scriptures as to stand the test of the first great note, and the third also, notwithstanding the literal disobedi-

ence of omitting the right administration of sacraments. Quietism was once the refuge of piety, when it fled the noise of sounding brass and tinkling cymbals in the show of that huge exterior which drove a true Church to the wilderness; and why should this Church, reformed and restored, object to the shelter we can afford, for that silent protest against forms which goes to the opposite extreme of inward light? On the whole, in view of the fact that our Christian faith is not merely or mainly sacramentarian, and thankful to God for this, like the apostle Paul (1 Cor. i. 14), and notwithstanding our Baptist brethren exaggerate the baptism of a parent and yet refuse to let him profess for his child, and although the Quaker Friends cremate the visible ordinances with fire within themselves, and will have no ecclesiasticism but what is spiritual and angelic,—yet both these bodies—at least, in the orthodox division of each—holding the pure word of God to be preached and read with the right of private judgment, and therefore holding all ecclesiastical problems to be soluble aright in revelation and reason, are fairly entitled to be enrolled in the sisterhood of true visible churches.

Especially so in considering the *third* chief note of a true Church—the right exercise of discipline, surrounding their folds with muniment of divine appointment to repress the follies and rebuke offences, which mar the consistency of a good profession. In this respect these modern churches compare most favorably with two of the historical churches—the Lutheran and the Anglican. Neither the Augsburg Confession nor the "Thirty-nine Articles" contain any provision for the censorship of morals. Herein is a memorable contrast between the two great branches of the Reformation. Zuinglius and

Calvin began with the postulate, that a reformation of manners should go hand in hand with reformation of doctrine, but Luther and Melanchthon thought it enough to secure a life becoming the gospel to fill believers with gratitude and love, trusting to the expulsive power of a new affection the regulation of life and prevention of scandal. The only office of the law, according to these great teachers, must be that of a schoolmaster to bring men to Christ, and hence Luther's catechism puts the commandments before the doctrines, whilst the Reformed in their catechisms put the doctrines of grace first and the moral law second, holding the latter to be also a rule of life in the hand of a Mediator.

The Church of England has nothing in her standards except one of her authorized homilies to indicate this great ordinance of discipline, which our Lord enjoins, and with which the head of the last surviving apostle was so filled in the vision of Patmos, and, although she is classed with the Reformed by historians, she ought to be marked as an exception, being Lutheran more than Calvinistic. The tendency of both these bodies having been toward alliance with the State in some definite form, and therefore to be imbued more or less with Erastianism, which defers to the civil authority the censorship of morals within as well as without the Church, we must let the deformity of this effect alone till every such unhallowed affinity be dissolved. And yet, however inapplicable the third note of a true Church may be to these renowned churches, and however doubtful the second may be, the right administration of sacraments, it is clear as the sun that the first and all-engrossing mark is theirs, the Bible, unchained, and "not bound," the promises of God, the gospel of his kingdom,

the "lively oracles" committed to them both, to be preached and read, with the right of all people to judge for themselves. However much we regret the vexation with which neological criticism in Lutheran Germany has been sifting the sayings of God by his Spirit, and however confused the many translations and challenges of the text itself in England, these bodies both do sing in their anthems, "The words of the Lord are pure words; as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times." This must ever be the song of a true Church, wherever the people in common are allowed to read the word for themselves.

Thus we see how comprehensive and sufficient is the first note of a true visible Church, and how the second and third may be reduced to this one; how the sacraments are the word made visible in signs and only less edifying when these aliments of life are not literally touched and handled; how Anabaptism itself, however alien from the original and perpetuated covenant of promise in the family, and therefore hardly ecclesiastic at all, has, in possessing a pure gospel, the covenant of grace "ordered in all things and sure," and how churches that are wanting in the scriptural ordinance of discipline are destined to overtake it in the progress of purification by the word, when union with the State is dissolved and they come to bind and loose on earth by the faithful and formal application of divine words to offences.

Thus we see, also, that this cardinal test becomes a bond of unity combining many and great diversities of form and faith in one visible Church—the more intensely one as these diversities produce a rival and animated competition for one and the same great object, the conversion of the world to Christ. This object and this

bond must ever compress variations to visible unity and one that lives. This pyramid of Church diversities, each one of which has in itself this word of life and "lively stones," must be living at the top, for the Head is Christ, and every different organism which holds to his evangel must be a member of his ecclesiastical body, deriving life and animation from himself. Without this head and without this evangel there can be no true branch of the one visible Church, for the head is the source of life, and the gospel is the circulating life-blood in any true ecclesiastical formation. Hence the Socinians are not fellow-members in such a body, because they deny that our exalted Saviour and Head is "very God," and they are therefore without an adequate headship to communicate life, influence, power and unction to such a diversified body, which must overspread the world through all coming generations of men. A decapitated body is a lifeless trunk.

The Roman Catholic Church also, by refusing to let the people hear and read the word of God and interpret for themselves its meaning, must be excluded from this true and one visible Church on earth, because the one chief test to which all others may be reduced condemns the despotism that "takes away the key of knowledge" and will not allow, among either Jews or Christians, any traditions but Roman to build up the unity which God approves. It was, therefore, a wise deliverance for the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church to say in 1835 "that it is the deliberate and decided judgment of this Assembly that the Roman Catholic Church has essentially apostatized from the religion of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and therefore cannot be recognized as a Christian Church." (See Baird's *Collections*, p. 560.)

If the papal Church would give the Bible to the people as Protestant churches do, the hierarchy and superstition which we disapprove should not hinder us from reconsidering this exclusion. Life in her feet might slowly restore itself to the heart, and even to the head. Such is the problem of divisions in the visible Church. They are unity in variety. Adhesion jointly to God's eternal word, as the only rule of faith and life for all members to use, makes unity enough in the militant Church. Diversities of name and banner and drill and organism only heighten the life of one great army. Organisms of both the being and the well-being in bodies are instinct with life and energy, in proportion to their interaction with diverse kinds. The unity of mere uniformity is inorganical and usually dead as a stone. Mutual charity is the great irenicon we need for diversities of form to win the world to Christ and his kingdom. Co-operation, again we say, is better than consolidation.

III. We are now to cease counting the external divisions of the one visible Church, and balancing the good of this apparent evil, as we proceed to consider the third embarrassment of ecclesiastical faith, in finding no perfection of light or holiness in any Church under heaven. The visible Church, alike in general and particular build, has a motley interior. Essential conditions of the visible in this world are mixture and mistake. Men must decide according to the credible, not the certain: God only knows the heart. Yet even God incarnate allowed one who had a devil to enter the original band of disciples, and to fall from the forming ranks of Christianity with open and horrid apostasy. It is his will, then, that the visible Church be a mixed society at present, and that her sentinels, however vigilant and

faithful, may be deceived by the false and the designing —his will, recorded even less in this inscrutable permission than in the necessary constitution of a militant Church.

We must, therefore, be assured that good results from this mixture, however much the enemies of Christ are scandalized and his followers aggrieved by the facts in every age. It is the obligation of piety and hope to discriminate this good in order to vindicate this economy, and, while deploring the inability of human efforts to present the Church on earth without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, to see that He who will at length achieve this glory does even now illustrate his overruling care in the very spots she wears and deformity she bemoans.

This mingled composition of the visible Church exhibits the analogy, which runs through all things that God allows beneath the sun. The world is a mixture. Good and evil are found together in every country and clime and age and generation, every condition of life, every pursuit of man and attainment which he proposes for betterment to himself and others. All is chequered, and God approves the right and abhors the wrong. Yet the world is his, and the fulness thereof. He owns it as his, preserves it as his, and neither the pride of philosophy nor the presumption of religion has ever stolen from himself the secret of evil in its origin, or the reason why he permits it on this planet of his own creation. And look at the noblest work of God on earth—a regenerated man. His soul is profoundly mixed. To him grace is given to mix light with darkness, life with death, liberty with bondage. There is a law in his members warring with the law of his mind, a spark of inextinguishable holiness pervading a gulf of corruption; yet he is God's

workmanship, God's building, pre-eminently, owned and cherished, sustained and blessed, with the peculiar care of a heavenly Father. To say, then, that a true Church must be no mingled society, having children in it incapable of faith, and adults in it who are deceiving and deceived, is to say that the Church must be purer than the very souls of the faithful, and without analogy in the works of both nature and grace.

This latitude of the visible Church is to the world a boon of incalculable benefit. It is a restraint upon sin: men are obviously kept from misdemeanor by a formal profession. The pride of consistency, the force of habit and the fondness of good-fellowship alone will induce the decencies of a harmless, and even commendable, life in the promotion of temporal welfare. However hateful and wicked hypocrisy must be, and injurious to religion the deadness of a false professor, yet the sins which formality fetters and prevents would be vastly more baleful to the world than all the harm that hollow-hearted insincerity could ever occasion. Restraining grace in mercy to mankind goes hand in hand with mortifying grace; and, though the latter alone reaches the fountain of iniquity, the former banks in its flood and compels corruption itself to own the majesty and power of truth.

Let the chimera of unmingled regeneracy in the Church on earth be furnished with some infallible standard of experience, in searching the hearts of professors and turning out all that are not Israelites indeed who by the force of early associations, the love of approbation, the fears of conscience, the delusion of false hope, or even the sinister motive of present advantage in the world, are in the Church, but not of it, in the inward

man; and at the breaking up of concealment would be the sundering of restraint, and floodgates of impiety would be opened to deluge the world, and then would come judgments of Heaven to destroy the nation. It is not so much the want of genuine piety as open transgression which insults his law with overt acts, that provokes the judgments of God on governments of men. It is not till hypocrisy itself is dead that the cup of a nation's iniquity is full. That economy of the Church, therefore, which comprehends all that come to make an open confession of Christ as the Author and Finisher of their faith, and do not discredit such profession with traits of character obviously inconsistent with its avowal in the judgment of charity, must have upon the world, whether truly converted or not, an influence to keep it safe from miseries which openly unrighteous men provoke. If they are no more than formal professors, their contact with men of the world is all the more intimate and genial and effective in its influence, while, on the other side, a credible profession wins the influence on themselves for good, of truly spiritual men, thus making a circuit of salutary influence, through this inscrutable mixture of the true and the seeming, to repel iniquity and enhance the happiness of Christian civilization.

But, more than this, the mere external profession which is credible at all must greatly benefit the Church herself, adding to her daily such as are saved, by the influence of parents on their children, and outwardly consistent professors on the outward world, leading men to the means of grace and adding to the visible resources which God has ordained for the propagation and transmission of his "glorious gospel." Doubtless, millions

untold of saints on high and multitudes of saintly members in the Church invisible, yet living here, have been led to salvation by means of a merely formal adherence of others to Christ and his ordinances. And could we stand at the door of the Church to keep such professors out by some spiritual acumen for discerning regenerated souls with certainty, making an invisible quality the required passport to a visible Church, a vast proportion of the resources—intellect, learning, wealth and power—which God has given by his word and providence to the visible Church must be shut off and lost. It is not in human nature to endow and promote any cause with which one cannot be identified even in name. Suppose a certainly regenerated membership the standard of admission, which the dream of a Church on earth without a hypocrite in her number must propose, were applied to the great men of her annals in the past; how many of them might be rejected!—Tertullian for his Montanism, Origen for his Restorationism, Eusebius Pamphilius for his Arianism, Jerome for his violent temper, Erasmus for his indecision, Grotius for his rationalism. And so on through subsequent generations of piercing Puritanism to this day: scores of eminent churchmen who have enriched the Christian Church with treasures of learning might have battled with fearful ability against her if by the insight of fallible men the certainly converted only could be accepted members in the visible fold.

Money, as well as mind, has been secured to the Church by this mixture of the true and the seeming. Divine wisdom has ordained that silver and gold shall be used in the kingdom of Christ, and that even enemies in heart to the cross of Christ shall be made to help it

with their gains. And men will not help with their substance a cause with which they cannot have a nominal connection, however well they may behave, without being subjected to some inquisition which pretends to see the invisible within us. Such perfection of the visible Church might remove much of her dross, but certainly would lose much more of the gold from her treasures—perishable and worthless of itself, but divinely appointed for instrumentalities of mighty importance in the progress of Christianity on earth.

But more than this by far is the protection which this external economy secures from robbery and persecution. Nominal professors, confessedly a disgrace in general, are often a shield of safety for genuine professors. Unsubstantial husks cover the precious seed and screen it from a blasting hostility. The world hates the Church with as fierce a malignity as ever, and we are not without ominous monition at present that new agnostic adversaries of atheistic venom and socialistic virulence wait only for a change of circumstances to blot out Christian civilization itself and dye the scaffold afresh with the blood of saints. The chief preventing security for the Church is the number of her professing friends. Their adherence in form conceals her weakness, and the partisan though heartless array compels forbearance. Nominal professors are not much hated by her enemies, and would be spared if they were not to be struck at first because they are near. Those very men who now revile the Church because she is mingled with hypocrites, and make it their capital objection to Christianity that so many in the ranks are false, would, if the ranks were winnowed and the faithful only marshaled at the cross, behold her fewness with avenging

scorn and consider it again the signal for making havoc of the Church.*

But there should be an end of controversy on the subject, when we open the Bible and look through both the Testaments. Here we find a fourfold and consecutive authentication of that ecclesiastical covenant which made Abraham "the father of many nations"—type and prophecy and history and parable. The ancient Church, a type, and yet substantially one with the new, was embodied in a host of backsliding people murmuring, discontented and seditious, with but very few "of another spirit" like Caleb and Joshua, in all the march through a wilderness to Canaan. The later prophecies of Isaiah with teeming diversities of metaphor describe the expansion of the New-Testament Church as that of the Old, with greater variations and vaster accessions to the same visibility: "Lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes;" "Thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles." Chap. liv. And then, as "the kingdom of heaven" is set forth in parables by the lips of our Lord himself, it is in the parabolic phrase of mixture for analogy. It is likened to seed sown in stony ground and among thorns as well as in good ground; to a field sown with good seed, and mixed with tares by a subsequent sowing of the enemy, yet the tares to be left with the wheat till the ultimate harvest; to a net cast into the sea and gathering fish of every kind, which are to be separated, the good from the bad, only at the end of the world, when the angels come "to sever the wicked from among the just;" to a marriage entertainment where one was admitted in a regular way without a wedding-garment; and, in short, to everything in nature which can repre-

* Mason's *Essays on the Church.*

sent an assemblage of mortals entitled to the same participation of privilege and benefit provided for time in God's family covenant, and destined to an ultimate search and separation when the secrets of all hearts shall be made manifest.

On the whole, this economy of the visible Church is "God's husbandry" and needs not apology or explanation beyond the verification by his word, and it is only to indicate the solution of difficulty found by superficial acquaintance with his whole revelation, and by mystical dreamers who would make over again and better what he has made good enough for all mankind, that we have made any attempt to vindicate the unsearchable way in which he brings good out of evil. Strange as it may seem, only those who acquiesce in this divine economy are qualified to guard with proper vigilance and fidelity the door of entrance into the visible Church. As the true believer will aim at perfection the more he finds it unattainable in the present life, so the churchman who inherits from the father of them that believe will seek to preserve the heritage from abuse and reproach by keeping off as much as in him lies the profane and the ignorant. On the contrary, it is the enthusiast who deems it possible to make up a body of undoubted saints in his visible assembly that is always quick to concede a word for the shibboleth or a good feeling for the test, and by any and all means fill his tabernacle without scruple about the credibility or temper of his keys in opening the kingdom of heaven.

CHAPTER III.

THE ECCLESIASTICAL INSTITUTE.

WE have considered *ecclesia* in the different senses of its application according to the Scripture. We have reckoned the aspect of unity in the divisions of the visible Church as manifested in co-operation rather than organic union, animated more than distracted by diversities of name and banner, the great object being one and the same—a conquest of the world to Christ—and the bond of unity being the test of legitimacy and one to which all other notes of a true Church may be reduced, the gospel of the grace of God contained in his holy word, and that a mingled condition of the true and the seeming in every branch of the visible Church membership waits, according to the Bible, for divine solution at the last, and divine overruling meanwhile. And let us now contemplate the organized existence of the Church and institutionary marks in that particular framework which reason and revelation both approve.

The main ecclesiastical difference between the Old Testament and the New is a duality of service in the former and unity in the latter dispensation. Worship and instruction were divided of old between the temple and the synagogue; in the Christian Church they are united. Any public service now which does not com-

bine preaching or teaching with prayer and singing at one session of the people is incomplete, and belongs rather to the old Jewish ritual. The question, then, arises, How are the two separated elements of ancient ordinance made one under the gospel in its administration henceforth? Were the temple and the synagogue both superseded by a new institution at the coming of Christ? Or has one of them continued and the other become obsolete, as a type must be when the antitype has come according to promise?

We answer affirmatively to the last of these questions, and aver that the ecclesia called synagogue does continue substantially the same ecclesiastical institute it was in the days of David, and that the tabernacle or temple service in its main symbolical purpose, with sacrifice and ceremony and priesthood, was finished in the advent of Christ; and its vain persistency to exist in form a century longer was utterly destroyed by the contemptuous Roman emperor Hadrian. That annihilation of the Jewish state, like many a lapsed inheritance in every age, started a scramble for the spoils, and tempted the ambition of ecclesiastics in the second century to claim the vanished priesthood and gradations of rank in three orders as their own right by survival, making another species of ecclesia, divergent from both the two of Old-Testament ordination. And we know whither this new departure proceeded when, a century later, Cyprian himself declared that the Church of Christ is "built upon the bishops." Let us, then, return to the synagogue and see, in its origin, organism, exercise, changes and continuance, the true ecclesiastical institute, methodizing through all the ages that ecclesiastical covenant which began with the family of Abraham, and bears

the blessing to all nations in the ark of this constructure.*

A name is nothing without a history. The term "synagogue," at "the fulness of time" and since, would seem to have lost the generic sense in which it was originally used in descending to become a designation for the local and particular assembly, and even the house itself of worship, among the Jews. The word *συναγωγή* is used in the Septuagint as a translation of some twenty Hebrew words in which the notion of gathering is implied. Scholars have counted one hundred and thirty instances in which it is used by the LXX. to render the Hebrew word עֵדָה, the idea of which is appointed meeting, and twenty-five times in which it renders קָהָל, meaning a called meeting or assembly. In the same sense of gathering together it is used by Thucydides and Plato, Ignatius and Clement of Alexandria. We must, therefore, correlate the synagogue with all the varieties of expression which denote religious meetings of old—the proseuchæ, the oratories, the schools of the prophets, the resort to a prophet at the times of new moon and the Sabbath and the still more ancient form of implication "before the Lord:" "Moses of old time hath them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every Sabbath day." Acts xv. 21.

This antiquity must have been coeval at least with the settlement of Israel in the Land of Promise, and probably remoter than the institution of tabernacle and temple for the ceremonial worship enjoined upon the people, and presumptively ancient as the birth of Enos, grandson of Adam, when, we are told, "men began to call upon the name of the Lord," or, as in the margin, "call them-

* Vitringa, *De Synagoga Vetere, passim.*

selves by the name of the Lord," prayer and profession implied, and, of course, a concourse of people assumed.* However this may be, we cannot agree with Dean Prideaux that the words "of old" in the quotation from James at the Council of Jerusalem could not mean indefinite antiquity, because Moses could not be "read" in the synagogues before they had books, and they had no books before the Captivity and exile at Babylon. Doubtless, the dean must have known that oral reading from the memory of teachers and actors long preceded a manuscript on the desk, and the manuscript long preceded a book to be read; that thousands in Greece and Rome heard Homer and Virgil recited from the memory of strolling amateurs as if read from a book. So it must have been at these places of sacred instruction when copies of the law were not to be had even by rulers of the old theocracy, and long before the canon of Old-Testament Scripture was completed. And when the learned and pertinacious Prideaux adds, "It being the same absurdity to suppose a Jewish synagogue without a copy of the law as it would with us to suppose a parish church without a Bible," he must have forgotten that hundreds of "parish churches," for hundreds of years before Queen Elizabeth, through insular and continental Europe, had not a Bible to read in the sanctuary. Besides, it is evident confusion of mind in that eminent scholar to use the term "synagogue" in its latest, narrow, particular and local sense in measuring its antiquity, instead of that earlier and generic sense in which he admits it had been used convertibly with the "proseuchæ" of old —places of meetings for prayer which both Philo and Josephus identify with the synagogue. And even if

* Vitringa, *De Synagoga Vetere*, 271 *et seq.*

the word in its general sense of "gathering" for sacred teaching and devotion before the return from exile should not occur in the Jewish annals, there is no more force in this omission against a greater antiquity of this institution than there is against a Sabbath in Israel because it is not mentioned in a long stretch of five hundred years in Old-Testament history.

This indefinite antiquity of the institution may well presume that it originated in some order and intimation of God himself to patriarch or prophet, especially as we know that through all the ages the latter had precedence of the elder as often as he came along with credentials of a prophet to preside or officiate in the meeting. This presumption is greatly strengthened by the nature of such an institute in its functions, its officers appointed and oracles committed in trust for the interpretation and transmission of divine behests. It was the school of moral instruction for theocratic Israel, and not only ethical, but legal—a law-school in its tuition for all the tribes—and its commentaries were given to every corner of the realm. Prophets, priests, Levites and elders were interchangeably the teachers, and all of these were distinctly the appointment of God. Hence, both Josephus and Philo believed that the synagogue originated from divine intimation to Moses. "And from that time to this," said Philo, "the Jews are wont to inculcate the principles of their religion on the seventh days, setting apart that time to the study and contemplation of the things of nature; for the oratories which are in every city—what are they but schools of wisdom, of fortitude, sobriety, justice and piety, and of every virtue?" And for the accommodation of Levitical preachers manses with glebe, or "suburbs," attached were to be

assigned to them according to divine direction; and this resulted in the giving of forty-eight cities by lot, in which all the tribes participated, to the sons of Levi, that all might have a fair convenience in attending the synagogue, as we now call the places of meeting. And can we conceive all this designation of persons whom God appointed to such service apart from the temple, and see his authority in everything of local accommodation and work and details of exercise, and yet believe that the gathering there was unauthorized by himself and a mere contrivance of human wisdom?

That his people might have no confusion of mind about the duality of the Levitical service at the synagogue and at the temple by turns, mark how divine inspiration expresses the distinction at a breath on the lips of Moses in his farewell blessing of Israel (Deut. xxxiii. 10): "They shall teach Jacob thy judgments, and Israel thy law: they shall put incense before thee, and burnt sacrifice upon thine altar." Here we see the synagogue is first in the prophetic benediction, and as we descend the stream of prophecy to the very last of the canon we find in Malachi (ii. 5–7) that the commission to Levi is itself denominated "covenant" without indicating any longer service at the temple, as if the duality of exercise in administering the ecclesiastical covenant with Abraham were now approaching its ultimate unity in preaching and teaching the kingdom of heaven for all people: "My covenant was with him of life and peace; and I gave them to him for the fear wherewith he feared me, and was afraid before my name. The law of truth was in his mouth, and iniquity was not found in his lips: he walked with me in peace and equity, and did turn many away from iniquity. For the priest's lips should keep

knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth: for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts." How much do these words of sublime expostulation with Levi resemble and foreshadow the last great commission of our risen Lord and the pastoral charges with which it had been preceded! And shall we say, then, that all this belonged to an institute of old not appointed of God, nor inside and antecedent and part of that Church against which "the gates of hell shall not prevail"?

But, more than the nature and exercise and officers given to the Old-Testament ecclesia, we find that other ordinances, confessedly divine at the origin, were dispensed in the synagogue rather than in the tabernacle or the temple. The sacraments of old—circumcision and the passover—when ministered at all at religious meetings outside of the family circle, were observed at this institution. There was no solemnity for children at the temple-service except a formal presentation of the first-born son. And if the one hundred and twenty-seventh psalm was sung at the temple—"Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord," etc.—this had to be explained and applied at the synagogue, where the seals of the covenant were kept and affixed. Add to this important trust the great ordinance of discipline—a divine appointment from the beginning to the end of revelation for the preservation, honor and sanctification of the Church. The elders' bench was the court of justice and censorship of morals, and to this day Christian people are hardly allowed to seek any other tribunal until this one is tried. Now, again, we may ask, is it conceivable that God would choose for the depository of his own best treasure on earth—his word, his sacraments, his ministers and seals and benches of justice—an institution

which he did not originate with any intimation to any of his servants?

But if the pertinacious objectors will have it that the Christian church was to be modelled after the temple, and therefore we must regard the synagogue as merely man's invention, unless we find a precise record in the Bible of its divine ordination, we reply in this place to such assertion and demand, that God certainly approves an appointment as his own which must result from a necessity created by himself. It is obviously sound theology and logic to say that a necessary inference must be forcible as the premises from which it is drawn; likewise that the errand of divine revelation was not to supersede the faculty of reason, wherever it is competent to discover truth and fact involved in the premises divinely given. Now, when we consider the circumstances of Israel and the whole economy of the situation at their settlement in Palestine, how by word and providence both it was made impossible for the families to worship at the tabernacle or temple, how males only, and that but three times in the year, could go over hills and valleys by difficult and often impassable roads, we must see that they were not provided for in the facilities of religion more than were the heathen around them, if they were not authorized of God to attend conventicles for worship and instruction which were nearer at hand.

And the necessity was vastly enhanced by considering the obligations devolved upon all the tribes to be well instructed in the knowledge and observances of religion —upon every individual apart and every family apart and every tribe apart: "Therefore, shall ye lay up these my words in your heart and in your soul, and bind them for a sign upon your hand, that they may be as frontlets

between your eyes. And ye shall teach them to your children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down and when thou risest up; and thou shalt write them upon the doorposts of thine house and upon thy gates." Deut. xi. 18. And when we turn to the "Psalm for Asaph, to give instruction" (Ps. lxxviii. 5), sung at the temple for the synagogue and perpetuating indefinitely the tradition mentioned therein, how conclusively does its inspiration prove the institute itself to have been of God in the original!—"He established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children; that the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born; who should arise and declare them to their children; that they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments." There it was that such fidelity of parents to their children was enjoined—as it should be still—in presence of the children.

Now, if all this necessity, occasioned by the covenant God made with Abraham, and the geography God made for Israel, and the innumerable injunctions to teach and be taught which he devolved upon all the people, may not conclude with certainty an instrumental ecclesia of divine warrant to make it all practicable and convenient for obedience, then we have here the strangest enigma to be found in all the Testaments. But there is no difficulty with common sense. Assuredly, such a divine necessity is the mother of such a divine invention: "I wisdom dwell with prudence, and find out knowledge of witty inventions." It must be conceded at the very least

that the slightest intimations anywhere in Holy Scripture suffice to confirm this conclusion—a conclusion which Lightfoot expresses in these words: "What could they do without synagogues, but lose the law, sabbath, religion, and the knowledge of God and themselves, and all?" Some of the scriptural intimations are these (Lev. xxiii. 3): "Six days shall work be done, but the seventh day is the sabbath of rest, an holy convocation." Bishop Stillingfleet in his *Irenicum* says that the reason for erecting synagogues was "grounded on this command." What else can be meant by "holy convocation" as regular rest and refreshing on the Sabbath?

Historical incidents gleaned from both Testaments are even more incisive as unequivocal indications that regular opportunities and means of grace were furnished to God's people by his authority at this ancient ecclesia, so distinct from the temple. When the Shunammite, in anguish of heart for the death of her son, hastened to "run to the man of God," her husband, without knowing yet the cause of such urgency, asked, "Wherefore wilt thou go to him to-day? it is neither new moon nor Sabbath." Surely, Elisha was not far off and had some well-known place of regular ministration and occasional comfort in religion, according to God's appointment, apart from the central sanctuary at Jerusalem, or he would not have had the divine signet to his ministry in the miracle of restoring that child to life. 2 Kings iv. 10. Again, we have synagogues expressly called "synagogues of God" (Ps. lxxiv. 8): "They have burnt up all the synagogues of God in the land." No matter how much learned critics may have tortured both the original and the translation here, or what Asaph it was —whether in David's or Hezekiah's or Nehemiah's time

—he is named as the author of this inspired psalm before or after the Babylonish exile or the substitution of "assemblies" for "synagogues;" in the translation it is all the same to us in being that plural of religious meetings, and of course regular places of meeting, throughout all the land which God himself had authorized and the cruel invaders of Israel had burnt and destroyed.

New-Testament history also is rich with instructive incidents to the same effect. The attachment of our Lord to the synagogue is remarkable. There he worshipped in his youth and in his manhood. The record of his utterances there, at Nazareth, at Capernaum and all the synagogues of Galilee is replete with internal evidence that he regarded that institution as the Old-Testament Church in form. There he began the New-Testament preaching (Luke iv. 20) and explained the secret of its great commission to all generations: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor," etc. There his mightiest works of healing were performed, and in all his words and works in the flesh he never hinted by word or action that the ecclesia found and founded there was destined to pass away. It is true that there, as well as everywhere else, he rebuked hypocrisy and pride in "the time of reformation" which came with his ministry, and it is true that his errand was not institutionary in its nature; yet in coming "not to destroy but to fulfil" it is very certain that he did fulfil the destination of the old ecclesiastical institute—not to pass away with the temple, but to stand with a new anointing, and to inherit all fitting solemnities from both lines in the duality of old, the prophetical here, and the sacerdotal

there; now to be only one—the word, sacraments, prayer and singing praise for ever.

On the other hand, how different was his bearing toward the temple! When his disciples came to show him the buildings of the temple, he prophesied immediately its ruin, "Verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down." Although he taught at the temple assiduously, and performed benignant cures, and zealously protested against the degeneracy and pollution with which it was defiled, this ministration was that of a prophet rather than of a priest—the same that he exercised in the synagogue, where ceremonies gave place to instruction, ritualism to education and shadows to substance. In all this the apostles followed their Master, and, though entrusted with the work of laying foundations and formulating for the future of the Church, they confessed that "other foundation can no man lay than that is laid," and virtually owned that other ecclesia could not be built than what had been erected in at least forty-eight particular places, to which official teachers had been assigned by divine direction. This was manifested in their "Acts," and in their silence also. Wherever they could obtain the opportunity, in missions at home or abroad, they taught and worked at the synagogue, of course complying with all the becoming regulations of this institution. It had passed through many changes in coming down from their fathers without altering the main features with which it had been constituted, and so it should be continued. In details of usage accommodated to circumstances and people of different kinds, it had always fitted the occasion and the need; so it should be now.

The gospel in types and signs of sacramental significance suited to the faith of their fathers in mode was now to be the gospel finished and proclaimed to all people, testified and signed by sacraments of conspicuous simplicity which would last for ever. This was no revolution of ecclesia, but only that versatile conformity which it was made to exhibit from its origin as a system in which the "many nations" that are covenanted to Abraham as an ecclesiastical father have ever found, and will ever find, authority, liberty and law combined essentially, whatever may be the variations of method and administration.

Here we may quote the words of Archbishop Whately of Dublin in signal adaptation to the conclusion we reach: "It appears highly probable—I may say morally certain—that wherever a Jewish synagogue existed that was brought, the whole or the chief part of it, to embrace the gospel, the apostles did not there so much *form* a Christian church as *make an existing congregation Christian* by introducing the Christian sacraments and worship and establishing whatever regulations were requisite for the newly-adopted faith, leaving the machinery (if I may so speak) of government unchanged, the rulers of synagogues, elders, and other officers (whether spiritual or ecclesiastical, or both), being already provided in the existing institutions; and it is likely that several of the earliest Christian churches did originate in this way—that is, that they were *converted synagogues* which *became* Christian churches as soon as the members, or the main part of the members, acknowledged Jesus as the Messiah." (See *Kingdom of Christ*, Essay 2.) This concession, with his own *italics*, must bring this learned and eminent prelate precisely to

the logical position we take in rolling over the burden of proof upon those who say that the synagogue as well as the temple was "destined to pass away" at the beginning of the Christian Church. This beginning was the "converted synagogue," and converted by "introducing the Christian sacraments and worship," with regulations becoming the change, "leaving the machinery of government unchanged."

The Acts of the Apostles, loud as words of the apostles could be, simply proceeded on the assumption that the Church of their childhood was the Church of all ages, in which the seat of Moses should be occupied henceforth by the presiding elder, called bishop—one who would be heard and heeded when his works would correspond to his word, unlike his predecessors of the scribes and Pharisees. Accordingly, they went forth in missionary work to "ordain elders in every church" without the slightest intimation of this feature as a new one, but as one of course in perpetuating the Church of their fathers; and when they passed beyond the territory of converted synagogues to the Gentiles, and organized the Church among converts, it must have been done after the same order, because no mention is made of the contrary, and because Jewish and Gentile converts at Antioch, who differed about circumcision, had no difference about church government, but agreed to send commissioners to Jerusalem "unto the apostles and elders about this question" on which they did differ. And, following "Paul and Barnabas and certain other of them" to this council assembled, we can see in the deliberation there the parity of ministers, the office of ruling elder and the judicatory composed of both conferring, debating and deciding—not to send down advice

merely, but to promulge decrees that were "necessary things" to be obeyed; and this obedience was to be the compliance of charity with a charitable injunction, for the most part, to abstain from the appearance of evil.

In short, the old ecclesiastical institute is perpetuated in the Presbyterian system according to all that can be gleaned of apostolic measures and methods; and the more exact correspondence will appear in our subsequent discussion of details respecting the congregation—members, officers, service, privilege and judicature—and we close this chapter with a *résumé* of particulars in which it is now conceded by learned and eminent divines in the Church of England that the Christian churches of the first two centuries were modelled after the synagogue, and not after the temple:

1. The titles of office were the same as the former, and not the latter. "Elders," "bishops," "deacons," were the names, never "priests."

2. The places of worship were anywhere, and not confined to one place, either of exclusive offering or of superior sanctity. The place was a parish, and not a diocese for the elders or bishops of one church to superintend.

3. The exercises of divine service in the Christian churches corresponded to those of the synagogue, and not to those of the temple.

4. No badges of office or peculiar vestments were worn by Christian ministers, who in this respect were like elders of the synagogue, and quite different from priests of the temple.

5. No restriction of the ministry or eldership to a particular tribe or class of people, as in the temple, was ever applied to the candidacy for office, either in the

synagogue or in the Christian church. Any qualified person might officiate in the Jewish or the Christian church when called to do so in the due order. They were born to it at the temple.

6. Neither was there exclusion either of youth or of old age at all fit for sacred service—not even of bodily defects or of infirmities of health—in the synagogue or the church. Quite different, this, from the temple exactness.

7. No altar stood either in synagogue or in church. A desk raised up for the reader in the synagogue, and a similar arrangement for the preacher in the church, were all the fixtures of eminence in either assembly. But we know that in the temple an altar was the main feature—one for sacrifice, and another for incense. So prominent was this article in the sacredness that after the temple was no more the word "altar" continued as a metaphor of worship in the Christian vocabulary through all generations. It seems, therefore, a confusion of sense in using this word now in both the literal and the metaphorical meaning. Helping the senses by the visible image of an altar in the sanctuary is hardly congruous with help to the soul in spiritual oblation as it communes with Him "who hath by one offering for ever perfected them that are sanctified."

CHAPTER IV.

CONSTITUENCY OF THE CHURCH.

WE may affirm of church government what a renowned President affirmed of government in the United States—that it is "of the people, by the people and for the people," only substituting for "people" in the first clause the "Christ" who has all the government "upon his shoulder." Isa. ix. 6. Of course, the principle of representation must have qualified that republican utterance just quoted, in the second phrase, "by the people," who do by themselves what they do by others. But the great body of the republic was first in the thought, and its representation second. So of the Church that is "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone." An inspired book, faithful interpreters, and first and last a divine person, only can begin to collect the great suffragan congregation of God's people. Its polity, therefore, should begin with the study of its membership rather than of its ministry.

"All baptized persons are members of the Church, are under its care and subject to its government and discipline; and when they have arrived at the years of discretion, they are bound to perform all the duties of church-members." Lately this formula, which had been satisfactory to the Presbyterian Church in past

generations, has been altered to these words: "All children, born within the pale of the visible Church, are members of the Church, are to be baptized, are under the care of the Church, and subject to its government and discipline," etc.—that is, they are not made members by the ordinance of baptism, because it is their birthright to receive it and all the privileges to which it is the formal initiation, just as their advancing maturity in life will evince a fitness to enjoy this and that particular privilege when recognized by constituted authority in the Church. "The pale," or enclosure, of this birthright must be wide as the whole visible Church, and this may be wide as loyalty itself to Him who has "the government upon his shoulder." Every form of visibility is loyal to Christ the Head which witnesses for him in giving his word to the people, the scriptures of the Old and New Testament, to be heard and read in the exercise of private judgment, enforcing the behests of our Lord therein contained, with such discipline as will tend to purity of doctrine and life, communion with each other, and the extension of his kingdom over all the earth.

The membership of infants in this great commonwealth is primary and indefeasible, though not conceded by certain branches that refuse baptism to babies, and only *quasi* conceded by others that do admit them to this covenant seal, and yet qualify as merely "constructive" the census which enrolls them as denizens of the kingdom on earth, although their names be multitudinously written as fully members in the Church of the first-born in heaven. Even civil government carefully reckons little children as members of the state and fully entitled to the protection of any right accruing at their birth. The craving of our nature itself is to

have a record of births in the Church, and to signalize with offices of religion the first epoch of each human personality. "The mother of us all" should not be recreant to the roll and seal of heirship at the crisis when a mother's care and close attention are to be engaged as is never possible again through the whole career of life.

In the Old-Testament Church the membership of infants and recognition of it in a sacrament are manifest and incontestable, and we readily find a warrant for the same in the New-Testament dispensation of a perpetual Church. An abundant warrant indeed it is, argued from the identity of the Church under both dispensations, the clear recognition under each of a religious character in children, the great maxim of all economies that a privilege once granted will continue to be of right and force until revoked by the authority which gave it, from the absence of all complaint on the part of believing Jews respecting any curtailment of ancient privilege in this respect, which would have been made and answered on the inspired records if so dear a privilege under the old economy had to be surrendered to any innovation of the new. It is argued, also, from the express declaration of Peter on the day of Pentecost—"The promise is unto you and to your children," etc.—which by no torture of exegesis can be made to drop the principle of representation in parents, and from the examples of household baptism given in the New Testament, making it probable in the highest degree that little children were included in the administration as capable of "receiving the Holy Ghost," as well as their parents, who were young enough to be engaged in the activities of meridian life. These general indications cannot be more than hinted here in

order to justify the comprehension of parents and children together in the congregation of a visible church.

To a people so constituted, born and baptized six main privileges belong—the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, household baptism, the right of suffrage in choosing spiritual officers, the exercise of gifts in subjection to decency and order, the nurture and admonition of discipline, and the missionary consecration devolved by the great commission of our ascending Lord. For the enjoyment of such privileges there is a fitting prerequisite to each one to be recognized by proper authority. There is no participation as matter of course, unchecked and ungoverned, in the house and kingdom of Christ. No birthright liberty in any kind of government may venture on privilege without reins of control to speed or estop the exercise of right in any individual. The man who is born in our land has, of course, the rights of a citizen, and yet these rights may be fenced off with special qualification to be manifest or deponed without the slightest invasion of birthright. He must pay his tax before he can vote at the polls. He must reach a certain maturity of age before he can dispose of his property. He must qualify in the value of what he possesses before he is accepted as a surety for his friend. So, and much more, because they are sacred and critical, must it be with all the privileges pertaining to the commonwealth of true religion.

Let us consider now the first great privilege of a baptized member—to commune at the Lord's Supper. Our Directory for Worship (chap. ix.) requires the qualification of "sufficient knowledge to discern the Lord's body," "the years of discretion," and all other qualifi-

cations of the candidate, to be "left to the elders as judges," who are to examine him as to "knowledge and piety." Such is the summary of qualification to be required for this "sealing ordinance." And yet simple and practicable as all this may seem, no question has agitated Puritan and Presbyterian churches in the past more grievously, if not divisively, than the terms of admission to the Lord's Table. Only the truly converted who are born again may worthily partake. The reality of this prerequisite, however, cannot be ascertained by the judicial penetration even of spiritual men, for the secret of true conversion escapes the observation of men, and often even the consciousness of him who has it. Besides, the work of grace in the hearts of men is indefinitely diversified. While the main characteristics of a saving change must be alike in the rise and progress of a new life, the time, the occasion, the ways and the means of the new birth are as various in experience as the faces of men to the eye of observation. While the common lineaments of human visage are the same in contour, no two are exactly alike in shades of expression and minute configuration. Perhaps the diversities of religious experience are greater than these, because God only knows the transition from death to life in any individual and keeps the secret in his own book of life, while the ordinary features of such a change will be manifest as an epistle from him to be seen and read of all men.

This manifestation to spiritual men is what they call a credible profession. We take middle ground between two opposite extremes on this important question. The officer who acts in admitting a member to full communion is not to be guided by the measure of his own

personal experience, nor even by suspicions of genuineness in the candidate's avowal. If the form of expression be faultless and the narration of experience be probable on its face, in accord with terms of communion expressed in the Bible, and if no inconsistency of moral conduct be observed to make the Session doubt sincerity in a candidate, the judgment of charity is that the profession is credible and private surmises should be held in abeyance. Mistake in the case will not spoil but mix the visible Church at present—an evil which our insight may abate, but cannot prevent.

There is more difficulty at the other extreme. If we are not required to be inwardly and individually sure, why should we inquire at all respecting the conversion of an applicant who comes without a visible spot on his moral character, and with intelligent apprehension of the responsibilities assumed in full communion at the sacrament? why search his heart with catechetical inquisition to find out the work of the Spirit there? If the Church is mixed, as it must be wherever it is visible in this world, and we know that the overruling goodness and wisdom of God will meliorate the world with such a mixture, why should we not consent in form, as well as in fact, to this constitution, and ask no other terms of communion than adequate intelligence and a good moral character? Questions like these divide opinion among the best of men to this day. Calvin differed from Zwingli and Luther; American Presbyterians differ generally from the Presbyterians of Europe; Jonathan Edwards differed from his predecessor at Northampton, the pious Stoddard, and on that account was driven from a pastoral charge where Pentecostal effusion had honored his ministry.

Let us, therefore, consider in brief a subject of so much practical importance.

Is a good moral character, along with competent knowledge and sincere desire, sufficient qualification for admission to the eucharist, or should we insist on more evidence in the fruits of genuine "piety" and examine a candidate, as he is required to examine himself, "whether he be in the faith" as it works by love, purifies the heart and overcomes the world? We affirm, in answer to this latter query, assuming, of course, that the sacrament is not a converting ordinance to the worthy partaker himself, though it may be to the spectator who looks upon it as the "visible Word." To the believing receiver it is a sign and seal of what he has already in possession, and it is the quality of his title to such possession that we look up in searching the record of his lips and life.

(1) Our examination of an applicant must aim at the same thing that his own examination of himself does in the direction of the Church invisible—according to the apostolic injunction, to see whether he be in the faith and Jesus Christ be formed within him by faith, or whether his approach is but the venture of "reprobate" hypocrisy. Here precisely we have use for that remarkable text, "The Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." It blends the visible and the invisible so closely together in ecclesia that they are scarcely distinguishable from each other at all by any translation that is just. The clause may be rendered simply "the saved," or that "are being saved," or that "will be saved," or that "should be saved," as in our Authorized Version, but in any and every way it means that accession to the visible Church is in pursuit of true salvation surely

realized in the Church invisible. The scope of this passage for such a proof must be that all concerned in adding converts to the church must look for good evidence of saving faith at the entrance. Of course the Anglican predominance in the late New-Testament revision, which strikes out of the passage any mention of "the Church" at all in rendering it, would deprive us of our illustration here. The revisers blot ἐκκλησίᾳ (the "Church"), found in the original, with the phrase "to them," and allege in the margin that "ecclesia" means "together"! The sacred technicality must be reduced to a skeleton of etymology, and the very first historical use of ἐκκλησίᾳ in the New Testament has been suppressed—apparently in the interest of that ecclesiasticism which hides the obvious identification of the new with the old ecclesia and prefers the temple hierarchy to the Christian church for a model.* The distinction of visible and invisible in the word "ecclesia" does not make two churches, but one, as much as body and soul are one person and scaffold and walls are one erection. We are to admit to full communion members of the visible on the fair presumption that they are already of the invisible Church, and this presumption is authorized on proper examination of their "knowledge and piety."

(2) The same is argued from the true nature of a sacrament, which is to signify and seal to us what is already possessed by the soul, and not to impart anything more than the increase of strength and comfort in the enjoyment of what has been antecedently imparted. Otherwise, we pervert the sacrament. If a man is not converted in order to partake of the blessings conveyed in the ordinance, he must partake of them in order to

* See the *Commentary* of Dr. Addison Alexander, Acts ii. 47.

be converted. If the Supper be not the children's bread only as they hunger and thirst for righteousness, it is bread for those who eat in order to be hungry and drink in order to be thirsty, and is therefore without significancy and is abused.

(3) The duty of open profession implies it. One who is savingly converted and feels the power of redeeming grace and mercy will publish what God has done for his soul. The first and best occasion for this will be his entrance into full communion with God's people and their Saviour at the sacrament of the Supper. It is the test of loyalty and obedience, and we can stand it only when we "obey from the heart" and confess from the heart: "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." But if the heart be not inquired for at all at the entrance, if the man of faith and the man of morality are alike received, without attempting discrimination, on the part of those who have the keys, where else can the opportunity be found for signal attestation of divine mercy in the work of saving change?

(4) A credible profession of saving faith is required, also, to distingush holiness from morality, while it includes it before the world. If the Church will not endeavor to separate the precious from the vile, in kind as well as degree, by requiring evidence of regeneration at her gates, she ceases to stand before man as a witness for God, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people. She obliterates the line between morality and grace. If the world can see that the level of her own decency and moral sincerity is high enough for admission to the Church, it will be apt to conclude it is safe enough to enter heaven also.

(5) The ordinance of discipline imports the same economy in its principles—that credible evidence of regeneration should be had of such as come to the privilege of full communion. Discipline were not needed in the Church distinctively if its aim be not to secure a higher sanctification than what satisfies the world. When the offender is to be restored, it must be on confession of sincere repentance. But repentance "is a saving grace" manifesting fruits meet for repentance, and therefore evidence of true regeneration, and to say that returning children are to be passed on stricter terms than are required of strangers at the gate is incongruity in managing the house of Christ.

(6) Acts of the Apostles bind us to require more than good character and adequate intelligence. The first three thousand on the day of Pentecost were accepted on the declaration of repentance felt in the heart, and, receiving the word, were baptized for the remission of sins, and, receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost, "continued in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship." When the eunuch desired baptism of Philip, the latter said, "If thou believest with all thine heart thou mayest." When the apostles wrote letters, they sent them with greeting to the "saints," which they received also from the "saints." These were admonished in terms which accredited the genuineness of their faith, and their faults and follies were censured in expressions of surprise and sorrow, evincing that the presumption of true godliness belonged to their profession. If no evidence of real conversion had been required at the entrance, the style of apostolic salutation is chargeable as hollow courtesy and empty compliment.

These are some arguments for the current usage of American Presbyterians in searching for more than sin-

cerity, knowledge and good morals on the part of candidates for admission to sealing ordinances, but we must not overlook another side or slight the objections which good and great men have urged in demurrer to the usage, though complying with it in form.

(1) They ask why, when we maintain the mingled condition of membership in the visible Church—recognized, though regretted, and abundantly signified as a necessary fact in the parables uttered by our Lord himself—we do not suffer this mixture with our free consent, but seek to make the Church what we know she never can become—perfectly pure on earth. It is enough to answer that facts are not the rule of duty in our faithfulness. We know that individual believers can never attain to perfection in the present life, but shall we therefore not attempt it in following the example of Christ with our best endeavor? Because the marksman at his distance cannot drive the centre of his aim, shall he not try it? Because evil is overruled for good in the government of God, shall we any the less resist the evil and avoid it to the whole extent of our discernment? Credible evidence of a perfect change in the heart of a neophyte is what charity itself requires, although "we know in part, and prophesy in part," only, in the judgment of his worthiness.

(2) It is objected that the Israelites of old were called God's people and admitted to the passover at times when no judgment of charity could accredit their genuine piety. This objection assumes too much for the objector himself. Those ancient church-members at such times were without the moral sincerity, blameless life and competent intelligence which the objector demands for indispensable terms of admission. Besides, there was a double mixture

in those theocratic times of church-membership: Church and State united, as well as the true and the seeming, under the seal of circumcision. The passover, also, was a national celebration as well as sacrament of the Church. This external relation alone, so constituted, would make them distinct among the nations as people of God when such denomination was by no means the same as "saints" in the parlance of New-Testament times.

Yet there was much discrimination made of old in the qualification of worthy participants: the presumptuous sinner, the stranger, the apostate, the ceremonially unclean, were excluded. The hypocrite was challenged severely: "When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hands, to tread my courts?" "I hate, I despise, your feast-days, and I will not smell in your solemn assemblies." When God was about to choose a man "after his own heart," and the sons of Jesse were "sanctified and called to the sacrifice," the memorable words of direction were given to Samuel not to look on the countenance or anything specious externally, for "man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart." Admitting that less of heart-religion was required for the ancient passover, is not God represented as finding fault with that economy, and is not the new mentioned as a time of "reformation"? This reformation is described abundantly in the prophecies of old as consisting in the greater purity of New-Testament membership, such as Isa. iv. 3: "And it shall come to pass that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem."

(3) The objection from the case of Judas Iscariot may

be disposed of in the same way substantially. Whether he did actually partake of the Lord's Supper at the original institution is left in doubt by all the "Harmonies," seeing three of the evangelists apparently on one side and one on the other, the order of time being so incidental in sacred narratives, and the certainty of our conclusion on such a point being so unimportant. It is certain that Judas had not the moral sincerity and the knowledge to "discern the Lord's body" as it is exhibited in the sacrament, both of which the objector demands for terms of communion. And it is entirely certain that our Lord was not deceived in the man at all: "Have I not chosen you twelve, and one of you hath a devil?" "Now are ye clean, but not all;" "One of you shall betray me;" "That thou doest do quickly." However inexplicable the case of Judas in regard to fellowship, motives, remorse, etc., one lesson is clear to us, and quite sufficient ecclesiastically, and that is that our Lord, officiating first as an example to his ministering servants through all future time in condescension to our weakness and liability to err in judging men, laid aside as it were for the moment his prerogative to search and know the hearts of men and took them at what they professed to be, leaving in this a signal monition that his ministers should keep their own surmises in abeyance and suffer the credible in a religious profession to share the confidence of charity.

(4) Another objection is brought from the baptism of infants. If we receive them to a sealing ordinance without the possibility of knowing whether they have shared a new birth of the soul, why not receive adults of good moral character without seeking after any evidence of regeneration besides? It is enough to answer that from

a total impossibility in one case we may not argue against a proximate possibility in another which is different. Each appointment of God must be observed according to its own nature. When he sanctions the application of a seal to one class of persons who are incapable of actual faith, it does not follow that he sanctions the seal as applied to those who are capable without fairly testing their faith according to his word. We search only for signs of true conversion, whether these are seen in the hopeful interpretation of a promise—"To you and to your children"—or in the credibility of an honest avowal. Now, the faith of a godly parent in trusting a promise for the salvation of his seed will warrant a presumption fairly as the ingenuous narrative of adult experience will effect in our administration of the seals. In fact, thus far, the aggregate of admissions to full communion will show that the hope of the Church is not disappointed in gathering into the fold a covenanted seed sprinkled in infancy as much as in even the crowded accession of professing proselytes.

(5) The difficulty of fixing the standard is another point of objection. No two believers have had precisely the same history of a saving change; therefore, no two or three elders can unite properly in judgment, as they must naturally bring to it the process of their own individual experience. This would be plausible, and perhaps unanswerable, if any other kind of standard could be fixed and certain in its application. There are more imperfections of knowledge, more shades of character and more degrees of moral sincerity reckoned than all the varieties of spiritual experience expressed by the candidates. A germ of genuine godliness will always be more easily ascertained than competency of

knowledge, morality and sincere desire. Diversified endlessly in every condition of life, it has, nevertheless, an identity which few spiritual judges can fail to discern or the range of charitable circumspection fail to recognize; and its far greater value, when fairly accredited, will justify the preference of "piety" as our safeguard, even if its manifestations were equally vague and dubious, for it ensures every other test which can be applied, while, reciprocally, no intelligence nor integrity nor earnestness of soul combined could ensure it or secure its welcome into the confederacy of faithful Christians.

These indications of thought on a subject which lies near the foundation of the visible Church on earth should balance our minds and guard us against enthusiasm on the one hand and indifference on the other—from the Anabaptist figment of a perfectly holy Church on the one hand and the papal arrogance of infallible visibility on the other. Moderation here should be known to all men, and would do much in this life to make the Church a "pillar and ground of truth" and her conduct "without spot or wrinkle or any such thing."

CHAPTER V.

CONSTITUENCY OF THE CHURCH (CONTINUED).

A SECOND main privilege of baptized members may be called household baptism in the family institute as a distinct bundle of care in the bosom of the visible Church. Prior in form to the enlargement of Abram's name, as we see afterward in his life, when the promise was extended and he was made "father of many nations" and the ecclesiastical covenant was made for all people and all time, this original germ, though unsealed at first, should be considered as the ecclesiastical unit and be continued in the practice of household baptism through all generations of New-Testament time. The apostle Peter preached it at the opening of this new dispensation with peculiar emphasis to Jews and Gentiles both. The former, whose characteristic jealousy for the "family apart" would meet the gospel of enlargement with murmur at the loss of this privilege under the Old-Testament covenant, he reassured that the family parcel must remain to inherit the promise made to parents for them and their children, and that with a new form of the seal and its enlargement of application also: "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as

many as the Lord our God shall call." Acts ii. 38, 39. Even admitting that "the promise" here mentioned was not distinctively that made to Abraham and his seed, but the general effusion of the Spirit witnessed at Pentecost and predicted "by the prophet Joel," we read in that prophecy (Joel ii. 28, 29) a detail of the household corporeity as sharing the fulfilment: "Your sons and your daughters," "Your old men" and "your young men," "The servants and the handmaids."

When we turn to the Gentiles, whither the same apostle was constrained by concurrent visions to go and spread the gospel (Acts x.), we see the household of Cornelius, a Roman centurion, the first-fruits of the Gentile world. And there it was that the great measure of extension for the ordinance of baptism was so distinctly uttered by the apostle: "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?" The logic of this interrogatory is enough to bind up the family again as a unit of the ecclesia while the ministration of the Spirit endures. To be born again, "not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God," unites a living soul at any age to the Church invisible; and to be born at all where means of grace are had unites a living soul at any age, susceptible as all ages are of regeneration by the Holy Ghost, to the visible Church with formal initiation by a sacrament of God's appointment. And means of grace are most efficacious when uniting both nativities in one effectual calling.

Believing parents lay hold of two covenants in the family relation, one conditional, the other unconditional. One promises a prospered succession for time on the

presumption that father and son will be respectively faithful in duty; the other promises a perfect salvation to the believer personally on the presumption that, however disappointed he may be in the lapse of a family covenant, he may repose on the covenant of grace, whose conditions cannot fail, as they are undertaken by a covenant God himself. For illustration we may cite the family records of a remote antiquity when this hallowed integer was revealed so much as the seed-plot of both Church and State. When "Eli the priest," for laxity in family government and for reproving too daintily the profane and disreputable conduct of his sons, had the promise revoked in his old age and the household covenant broken before his eyes, a man of God explained the tenor of this covenant as he proceeded to announce the doom of its infraction: "The Lord God of Israel saith, I said indeed that thy house and the house of thy father, should walk before me for ever; but now the Lord saith, Be it far from me; for them that honor me, I will honor, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed." On the other hand, among "the last words of David" we read the consolation of his own soul in the covenant of grace along with sad allusion to the degeneracy of his sons: "Although my house be not so with God; yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure: for this is all my salvation, and all my desire, although he make it not to grow." 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. In these two delineations of covenant security we see what a privilege is the family tie—double benefit and double blessing—for the life that now is and that which is to come, when both covenants are kept, and infinite resources of hope, contentment and solace to the

faithful parent or child when the conditional one fails in calamities or unfaithful collapse.

The next thing to be noticed on this subject is the extent of the household itself, or the proper limit to which we can adjust this portion of the apparent body of Christ. May the head of the house present for baptism more than his own children and grandchildren? May he become sponsor, by the seal of this ordinance, for the orphans of kinsfolk cast upon his tutelage and care in their infancy or childhood, for minors during the tenderness of youth committed to his wardship or apprenticed by civil contract in childhood and to be trained to work under his direction at handicraft or agriculture? May missionaries present the little ones of heathen parentage over whom they have entire control in home and school? May deacons to whom the care of the poor is committed present the little children left in orphanage on their hands? To these questions our great analogy of the Old-Testament Church, as organized at first in the family of Abraham, our New-Testament facts, our traditions of usage from historical churches of Protestant faith, our constitutional principles of government by representation, and the acts of our General Assembly on appeal, reference, review and control, authorize an affirmative answer.

The sponsor's fitting prerequisite qualification is another question of importance in discussing the privilege of household baptism. The Directory enjoins that "those who are to be admitted to sealing ordinances, shall be examined as to their knowledge and piety." Baptism is obviously one of these sealing ordinances, and what is required of the unbaptized adult—"satisfaction with respect to knowledge and piety"—should

be required of the baptized adult in representing the infant or child when making the profession for it which baptism signifies. He should make a credible profession of true piety as well as of proper knowlege, and either one or both professing parents, when giving such satisfaction, may be admitted to this privilege without having exercised any other public privilege in the church. Privileges to which we are formally admitted in baptism are all on a level, to be distinctly enjoyed according to fitness and opportunity. To make one the condition of another is neither congruous nor equitable, yet a prevailing practice of requiring an actual participation of the Lord's Supper previously by one or both of the parents is advocated on the plea of keeping sacred this initial ordinance, as if the Supper itself should be initial and made to supersede the special examination for baptism also, as required in the constitution. More than this unauthorized inversion, it is derogatory to the sealing ordinance of the eucharist when we make it a test in any way whatever—a term for holding office in the State, or sealing the solemnity of marriage, or admitting a baptized member to the endeared solemnity of having his child acknowledged a member of the visible Church. While it seems to make this baptism more unapproachably sacred it really tends to profanation of the Lord's Supper, when, as Dr. Samuel Miller said, we make it a whip to drive the parents into full communion at the sacraments; for many a man would venture to partake unworthily rather than fail to have his children baptized. Most of all, it is unscriptural. The facts of household baptism in sacred history preclude the possibility of the sponsor's having previously partaken of the Lord's Supper. Surely at the house of Cornelius no rite

of Christianity and no preparation but the baptism of the Holy Ghost conditioned the baptism with water of its inmates. And so of the two household baptisms at Philippi—that of Lydia, and that of the "keeper of the prison:" it was done "he and all his straightway." Acts. xvi. "I baptized also the house of Stephanas," said the apostle Paul in one place (1 Cor. i. 16), and in another he says of Stephanas and his house that they were "the first-fruits of Achaia," intimating plainly that no church existed at Corinth to commune with previously to their baptism. 1 Cor. xvi. 15.

But, although the practice of requiring one, at least, of the baptized members who seek the baptism of their child to be a full communicant is without either constitutional or scriptural warrant, yet the same "knowledge and piety" as that required for admission to the Lord's Supper should be ascertained as the prerequisite for this privilege of household baptism. It is expressly required of an unbaptized adult seeking the ordinance for himself, and, as representative of the infant, having been baptized himself, he should therefore in this capacity pledge the prerequisite for his child by his own confession. Yet the examination of such a candidate should have a specialty of direction corresponding to the nature of the privilege itself. Instead of specially searching after evidence of personal regeneration in the narrative of an applicant's experience, the object of examination in this case will be the credit of "knowledge and piety" in the moral and religious character of a baptized parent, capacity for training up his child in the nurture and admonition of our Lord, earnestness and regularity in attending on the means of grace, and that probity of character in the world, and conscientious conduct which

can safely be trusted in keeping promises, paying vows and redeeming pledges.

This requirement of qualification for household baptism would be no embarrassment at all if theory in our constitution were fairly carried out in practice of our government. All baptized members "are under the care of the Church, and subject to its government and discipline;" yet our church government over this class of members has been put to shame in the practice of civil government under which we live. From the rod of parental discipline, even before maturity of age, youth passes over to the civil judiciary, which never waits to be sought after before dispensing correction by its vigilant officers to all that are amenable to its jurisdiction. And why should our Church judiciary, in her eldership, overlook both native and baptized members of their community until they are puzzled to know who they are and whether they have any rights in court or competency to receive and enjoy them? To indulge this indifference or excuse the neglect or evade the reproach of having so large a nondescript ratio of members loose from the Church, and satirized by Anabaptism for a century past, quite a variety of scheming in polity has been attempted.

In 1859 it was proposed to the General Assembly (O. S.) by an important committee, appointed two years before, to dispense with formal process in discipline against baptized members and confine it altogether to the offences of "professed" members. Though such had been the general usage for a generation and more, although but one vote in a committee of nine had been reported as the minority, the sense of that body was staggered by the proposal to touch the old formula in

any way; and after a brief and animated discussion the report was recommitted and required to be made to the next Assembly. At the next the discussion was resumed and protracted, with strong development of opposition to that solitary change on which the debate was engrossed, and again the report was recommitted and the committee enlarged with a single eye to the restoration precisely of the original words in the book. This was done by the enlarged committee in 1862 meeting at Pittsburg, and was unanimously adopted by the General Assembly of 1863. The same proceeding occurred twenty years later, when another committee of revision appointed by the reunited General Assembly, after animated and prolonged discussion, reported back the old formula, which was approved again in the General Assembly, and finally adopted by a majority of the Presbyteries, voting distinctly. It is beyond question that it is still the settled mind of the Church that baptized members of the Church are "subject to her government and discipline," just as communicating members are.

Indeed, the distinction of "professed" members for the latter is inconsistent with the standards of all historical churches, and with the Scriptures also. Profession is identified with baptism, and not with the Lord's Supper distinctively. "To be baptized is to make profession," was the maxim of the Reformed when the Heidelberg Catechism was made. One important step toward the practical working of our old covenant theory has been taken of late by the revised Book of Discipline, which requires "the names of the baptized children of a parent seeking admission to another church to be included in the certificate of dismission." This right direction must lead to more distinct recognition

of their ecclesiastical status than before and invite the people everywhere to make this recognition more complete. The government of the Church, being also paternal in its nature, substituting *may* for *must* in view of difficulties and the "need of patience," though persistent and persevering to the end, would greatly facilitate subjection to its own authority wherever it is duly studied and known. Plausible objections to the practice of our theory are seen to be figments of imagination as we advance to real consistency. It used to be said that until the baptized member enters into full communion at the Lord's Supper he should be regarded as a minor, even to the age of fourscore. But minors, according to all analogy, are precisely the class of persons who need discipline administered in the most palpable form: "He that spareth his rod, hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes." This proverb fairly expresses the nature of discipline as an ordinance of benignity and affection when faithfully exercised in the family or in the church. It is emphatically a privilege to which one is admitted in pursuing his birthright as it is legitimately ordered, and the church is chargeable with wrong deprivation to withhold it on account of unwillingness in the subject to receive it.

Another plausible avoidance commonly made is to allege a distinction of degrees, taking discipline in its widest meaning as teaching, training, admonition, reproof, rebuke—anything for the merely baptized but actual process in administration. Yet government of any kind must be more than stoppage at these lower degrees. The ultimate penalty and, of course, the ulterior process in view are required to make the milder

antecedents effectual. It is when the child knows a rod for delinquency is at the end of the lesson that he gives heed and application to the beginning. It is when the citizen knows the coercion of power is at the end of legal requirement, with cost, that he is prompt to render a due at the first call of lawful demand. So it must be in the whole sphere of moral and religious obligation. Something beyond the present intimation of duty or dissuasion from sin, more potent than tuition and more palpable than words without action, must be the stringency which will bind together and enforce all prior procedures of disciplinary exercise. And the same correlatively with the faithfulness of those entrusted with the exercise officially. As the civil government of the country is propelled to watchfulness and care in common-school education and virtuous enlightenment of the people by the necessity of a direful infliction of punishment at last, so the governors of the church will be quickened and circumspect in the pastoral care of baptized members, young and old, when they are made duly aware that actual process on charges must be resorted to for purging scandal away from the baptismal font as well as from the communion-table.

The great objection, however, instantly and universally made is that it is impracticable, it cannot be done. It is hard enough to govern communicating members with adequate discipline, and baptized members would spurn the claim and despise the process. It may succeed for a purpose in the spiritual despotism of popery, but never in the franchise of radical freedom to which we are born in Protestant churches. The force and impatience with which this objection is made should

be met with the utmost calmness and charity in making an answer. We should learn what we can from popery itself, for wise policy may be taught us by adversaries. The compactness and conservation of that system, notwithstanding its corruption and slavery, are the wonder of history. We may venture the averment here that such perpetuation is mainly due to the asserted government over baptized generations, from age to age, making the body homogeneous, and therefore compact in proportion. And in this thing Romanism itself may appeal to the Scriptures. Here we find no distinction of church-members into two classes—the baptized and the full-communicants. We have many other distinctions made in Holy Writ among our members—the weak and the strong, the poor and the rich, the young and the old, the ignorant and the learned, the ruled and the rulers, the Gentiles and the Jews—but never, in the status of membership, such as the partially and the fully initiated, the professing and the non-professing baptized. This were to reproduce in Christianity the old heathen aristocracy of ethics: "Precepts for some, and counsels for others."

This objection also implies an essential difference of kind in what is different only in degree in the exercise of discipline. We may teach, admonish, rebuke, but not suspend or excommunicate the baptized member from the privileges which pertain to him at his lower stage of communion. But this must be arbitrary and without reason, for all church censure consists in the authoritative application of divine words to offences. The slightest reproof and the sternest excision are just the same in their nature. The word of God is an excellent oil in reproof at the first, and a sharp sword

in executing judgment at the last; but through all mixture of metaphor it is one and the same kind of discipline, and the only kind that any church is authorized to use. If, then, it is by the word of God we are taught and warned and reproved and suspended and excommunicated in the various forms of ministering discipline, why should we halt in this progress at the first or the second or the third, and not proceed to the last, in dealing with baptized members? Here, again, there is made by our modern practice an arbitrary distinction which is nowhere indicated in Holy Scripture. It has been alleged that process of discipline, as a distinct ordinance, is intended for the offences of full-communicants only, as in the judgment of charity they are presumably regenerate, and is therefore not to be used as a converting ordinance, like preaching the word. But surely the word of God is a converting ordinance in any form of its application to the souls of men; and when specially applied in the form of adjudication, its pungency is peculiar in producing as an instrument the two great graces of true conversion, faith and repentance. And this product is always sought for by the word alike among erring communicants and unregenerate baptized. James v. 19, 20.

To extenuate the common delinquency of practice and make it level with our constitutional theory of the covenant, some reduce the doctrine itself, and qualify the membership of baptized persons with a vague construction, as "incipient," "auspicious," "promising," *quasi*, or something undefinable and less than full identity. But the status of baptized members, being cardinal in our system, should be explicit and never befogged with words without knowledge. And, if it be not untena-

ble, it must be redoubtable. It must be in position to answer the challenge: What are your baptized children, when you say they are members of the church, and yet speak of your desire to have them join the church—that they are subject to its authority and yet never claimed by the exercise of authority, covenanted by birthright and by formal solemnity of initiation and yet allowed to be so much surrendered to the world that the very fact of their baptism is often merely a doubtful tradition? They are either professed members of the church or they are not members at all, for profession is made in baptism, as has been said already—the adult for himself, and the parent for his child—and a birthright neglected by the natural sponsor will not be neglected in a proper form of government of the church for want of the seal, but will be vindicated by the censure of that parent and confirmed in the subsequent profession of his offspring.

But we must not omit in this connection to notice a covert Anabaptism in another objection often urged—that such policy can be only forceful and destructive. Its pressure would either constrain the unconverted to enter into full communion unworthily or drive them away from the congregation altogether—would certainly make the visible Church more mixed than ever and make the non-believing recusant more disobedient than ever. Just two things already submitted in our premises are unfairly and totally ignored by the objector: 1. The credible evidence of true conversion to be required of every candidate for full communion—that special prerequisite which no form of government could force and no want of government could hinder; and 2. The solemn fact that everywhere and always, after the first

sowing of tares, the mixture must be let alone till the final harvest. No spontaneity of profession or enthusiasm of novitiate or figment of imagination or scrupulosity of keys or austerity of puritan will stop accession of the impure, however much we try to keep the visible kingdom of heaven here "without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing." Indeed, government itself is a predicate of imperfection, and would be without a province if a mingled condition of the true and the seeming together were not subjected in every department. The best judgment of charity on ample observation is that the body of full communicants is composed of many converted and some unconverted, and the body of baptized members at maturity is composed of many unconverted and some converted. In gross they are the very same; in proportion they are different. But all good government will contemplate the gross in its procedures.

Consistency is a jewel of slow formation. Logically, it is nimble enough to go downward with headlong haste from evil premises to worse conclusion; but in lateral development among the analogies it hesitates long in arranging adequately the truth and the right. Morally, it has been working slowly through long historical ages to make out the just balancing of power in governments of men. Advancing and retrograding all the while, "clear shining after the rain" is not yet. Ecclesiastically, though projected before the foundation of the world, it is not yet finished, and "the prince of this world," though "judged" and "cast out" long since, retains consistency of his own sort as the last fortress of his kingdom, from which the inconsistencies of churches, church-members and church government are continually charged with deplorable mischief. We

must work and study to be consistent, and this means we must begin together and stand together. "The many" is an apostolic requirement for the right exercise of government and discipline, and that we be "in a readiness to revenge all disobedience" when the obedience of good membership "is fulfilled."

Thus far the consistency of our scheme has been attempted sporadically. Here and there a brave minister has ventured the trial more in avowal than in actual practice, because he was alone among his elders, who thought him visionary and the old covenant an innovation when squared out and pressed in totality. We must be patient and prudent. It is better to wait, as the apostle Paul did and advised, for the preparation of a common sentiment to sustain the rectitude of such endeavor. But this waiting should not be delay on purpose. Our civil government, which has borrowed so much from our covenanting forefathers, would lend us a perfect analogy in this extension of consistency. Every decade search is made for children born in the land, and more minute interrogatories are made about ages and household residents, occupations, industries, education, than any Presbyterian Sessions ever think of propounding. Schools of rudiment and schools of reform, orphans' courts and orphan asylums, married relations and parental relations, administration of bequests and devises—in short, everything of a moral, economic, social and sanitary nature—is matter of judicious inquiry at the basis of well-regulated government in the world. Such is Christian civilization, however, and the complete separation between Church and State should not leave the Church apathetic and the State ungrateful. Demitting to secular oversight almost everything sacred

but the fellowship of adults, the Church has surrendered enough without allowing the Bible to be turned out of school, and prayer to be silenced in halls of higher learning, and "emulations" instead of conscience at college to become the factor of scholarship in chief, and remain the spur of unhallowed ambition to the end of life.

Surely, it is time for the Church to reclaim her alienated province and assume her authority over all that are born in her pale. We should hasten to rival the pontificate of Rome itself in writing to all our own parochial bishops, "The wisdom of our forefathers and the very foundations of the State are ruined by the destructive error of those who would have children brought up without religious education." Reformed Christianity must govern the education of her children at secular schools, and still more emphatically at Sunday-schools, which are now called so often nurseries for the Church. Sponsorial parents must not be allowed to substitute for themselves a sponsorial machinery unwatched to relieve their own hands of what they have covenanted to do in the family; and when they try to do their duty in both ways, the authorities of the Church must see to it that even a partial delegation of this momentous interest must not be made in a choice of teachers and superintendents without the sanction of an eldership. If both teachers and taught alike in parish schools and Sunday-schools are not made amenable to the governing authority in the Church, to recognize, revere and obey it, this power will be impotent thereafter in the control of all classes, baptized merely or communicating also. Let the true doctrine of the covenant be fairly asserted. Let children be made to know and feel from the earliest dawn of in-

telligence that they are members of the Church and are to meet the responsibilities of this relation through all their lives, and that as soon as they come to act for themselves they come to be subject to ecclesiastical as well as to civil authority. Let the Church work up with faithfulness and patience to every principle embodied in her standards, and there can be no failure in her legitimate government. "Many" will buttress the building when the foundation is laid consistently. Contumacy and defiance may withstand the process when it comes to citation and trial, but such notoriety will not always intimidate "the generation of the righteous:" "Their seed shall be known among the Gentiles, and their offspring among the people; and all that see them shall acknowledge them, that they are the seed which the Lord hath blessed."

The *third* main privilege of the people is to vote in the election of spiritual officers. This elective franchise in the Church differs from that in the State fundamentally in two particulars: the people do not create the offices which they are privileged to fill by their voting, either directly or indirectly, but accept these in the constitution God has given by his revelation. And the persons also to be chosen are sent to them by his calling without anterior convention or primary nomination of men. In most other respects the suffrages are alike. The equitable right in both rests on the principles of representation and production. The utmost freedom must be guaranteed to the people in choosing persons to represent them in government, because the representative is to do for them what they wish him to do; and beyond this, unlike the mere delegate or deputy, he may serve them best by going against their wishes according to his own light and the dictates of his own

conscience. Guiding and ruling are essentially included in true representation. So also in economy. The non-producing officers who live at the altar and at any functional occupation of life apart from the ordinary toil and industries of the people should receive appointment from the hands of those who support them with stipend or taxes.

The type of all this difference and resemblance we have in the Hebrew commonwealth as it was organized at first. The selection of Levi among the tribes of Jacob was the sovereign designation of God only, but the people of the whole nation besides were called before the tabernacle to accept and adopt this tribe as the consecrated order in place of the first-born of every family apart, signifying this by "the whole assembly" of other tribes putting their hands upon the heads of the Levites. Thus even the typical priesthood of the ancient Church became representatives of the people and had cities provided for homes, and other sustenance of great variety apportioned and allotted by all Israel. The special qualification, therefore, to exercise this privilege is contribution of one's substance to support the ordinances of divine appointment and the ministers of religion, who seem to be called of God to live of the gospel as long as they live in the flesh. In voting for a pastor the Form of Government (chap. xv. sec. 4) distinctly expresses this qualification thus: "In this election no person shall be entitled to vote, who refuses to submit to the censures of the Church rightly administered; or who does not contribute his just proportion according to his own engagements, or the rules of that congregation, to all its necessary expenses."

The negative form of expression by our book has

occasioned embarrassment and some variety of opinion among the churches. The fair interpretation must assume that all baptized persons, being members of the church, formally initiated, are admitted to the enjoyment of all privileges for which they manifest the proper prerequisite respectively. It is also to be assumed that they are consistently subjected to the government and discipline of the church. To exercise the privilege of voting, therefore, it must be clear that they are duly submissive to discipline and duly prompt to discharge their obligation to support the church by the contribution of their means. Delinquency in either of these particulars will debar the exercise of suffrage. The disjunctive "or," therefore, in the text does not imply two different classes of voters—those who are loyal in their obedience and those who pay well, even though not members of the church at all. This latitude, which is given in charters of civil corporation too often, is forbidden by the first principles of ecclesiastical organization, which make voting the peculiar privilege of church-members. This privilege is a gift from the Head of the Church, and to take the gift because one pays money to the church is to buy it simoniacally. The person who votes legitimately must have been "freeborn" if not enfranchised by a public profession—"born within the pale of the visible Church" at the very least of qualification. All citizens born in the land have at maturity of age a right to vote for a governor if they have paid their tax for the poll, but the foreigner who does pay tax is not on that account merely admitted to the polls. The removal of one disqualification where either of two negations would preclude a voter does not make an affirmative of the other negation, and much less does it allow

another class to be enfranchised by merely paying money without regard to the prime qualification of being "free-born" in the sense of Church-nativity.

Whilst our polity has been strained exceedingly in giving latitude of suffrage to the choice of a pastor because he sustains an important relation to all that hear the gospel at his lips, converted and unconverted, in the church and out of it, attending the congregation before him, it has been decided by the General Assembly that only full communicants should vote for ruling elders, on the presumption that such members are especially amenable to the Session, and therefore peculiarly interested in the choice of rulers. But, as we have seen already, this restriction is unreasonable in view of the unquestionable meaning of our constitution, which expressly subjects all members baptized to the government and discipline of every particular church. The Assembly, therefore, wisely decided the voting of merely baptized members, as well as that of communicants, will not invalidate the election of elders. And the distinctive principles of ecclesiastical voting have been faithfully developed in giving to all members the privilege, without distinction of sex or age, who are mature enough to come under the immediate government of the Session and are not disqualified by insubordination or the refusal of proper dues.

The right of suffrage rises to its highest dignity and power when it responds to the great commission cast upon the bosom of the Church by her ascending Saviour. Matt. xxviii. 18–20. Going and sending are identified in the force of this commission, which evidently made the Church a missionary society from the beginning. Her votes and treasures, her testimony and work, her power and glory, are all involved in the scope of this

behest. And the radical question confronts us here, and ought to be settled here in discussing the suffragan province which belongs to all church-members: Where was the commission lodged, and with whom deposited for all generations—with the eleven apostles as officers in their own right only, or as representatives of "the peculiar people" and the "royal priesthood" to be gathered and constituted by their instrumentality? If the former, the eleven personally, without reference to a constituency already existing and to be increased indefinitely by the gospel preached to all nations, we are held to a stringent necessity of making out a regular and unbroken transmission to individual officers in succession to keep the commission from being lost, and on this precarious succession the whole Church must be built till the end of time. History, both inspired and uninspired, has utterly failed to trace with certainty any such succession, and presumptive imagination argues it with lone asseveration which is unequalled in effrontery. Yet this view has been taken partially by some who believe in a relative and not an absolute necessity of succession, holding, also, that it can be traced, as Irenæus taught, in the presbyters, who have always had a line unbroken somewhere. But the transmission which depends at all on a supplement of history is always embarrassed with difficulty and dispute. The true channel of succession is faithfulness and ability—faithfulness to the record and ability in teaching it: "The things thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also." 2 Tim. ii. 2.

We return, therefore, to the alternative persuasion—that the last commission from our Lord was given to

the Church as a body of believers, to be their mission by their own elected representatives till the end of time. Such were the original twelve chosen by our Lord himself at the crisis of transition from the Old Testament to the New. Quickly as the juncture was passed an election was held to fill the vacancy made by the apostasy of Judas. Peter, as some believe, was too fast in making the proposal which seems to have anticipated the calling of Paul, but his action significantly meant a consciousness that the last commission reposed on the body of the believing people. Matthias was elected by the assembly of one hundred and twenty disciples to the office of apostle; and when they went forth to ordain elders in every city and every church, it was in the way of voting for these officers. Acts xiv. 23. The very word itself translated "ordained" or "appointed" means literally stretching out the hand—a gesture of the people in the act of voting. Derivative uses of the word here mentioned as the act of the apostles do not preclude the suggestion that, as in the election of deacons the popular vote preceded the formal ordination, so it was here, the apostles ordaining those who were previously voted for by the people. The great commission devolved upon the nascent Church by her exalted Head our Lord is like the constitution of a State in our parlance, resting on the bosom of the people as an organic law, creating offices, defining duties and prerogatives, excluding the people from an indiscriminate exercise of functions, and yet remaining their own instrument of order in such a sense that the authority it confers may be revoked for malversation by judicatories which the same instrument creates alike for the protection and the restraint of the people.

(1) This popular aspect of government, from the beginning of the Christian Church, will be justified by the most minute examination of records made at the supreme culmination of her system in the resurrection of Jesus. "Five hundred brethren at once" were present at the bestowment of the commission in the mountain of Galilee where he had arranged with the "eleven" to meet his disciples. 1 Cor. xv. 6. An exact collation of the different appearances of our Lord between the resurrection and the ascension will shut us up to this conclusion. And if, as some have thought, this large concourse and last command were had at Jerusalem, it is the same significance. Indeed, "the eleven" are promiscuously noticed throughout this interval as included with "disciples," "brethren," etc.: "Unto the eleven and all the rest;" "The eleven gathered together, and them that were with them." These are familiar expressions to indicate the following of a risen Redeemer as indefinitely more than eleven until the five hundred at once received the final behest. These first-called and original witnesses of our Lord charged in the presence of other disciples, as legates of the ascending Master, "Go" as representatives of the people, who in all their generations afterward would, as no extraordinary messengers of one generation could, enjoy the faithfulness of that promise: "Lo, I am with you alway, even to the end of the world."

(2) This view accords with the facts of Pentecostal inauguration. Power from on high was waited for by the body of disciples, and not by the apostles alone. They were all with one accord in one place when the Holy Ghost came down to distribute gifts for the effectual working out of the great commission: "All began to

speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." All that had "seen Christ Jesus the Lord" began to testify what they had seen, and to teach and preach as they were severally empowered to do in pursuance of that last charge. There was no formal investment of others with office to indicate an exclusive commission to "the eleven." The commission took immediate effect on every man who received the gift from God without "the laying on of hands" in mediate ordination. Thus Ananias went forth to preach and to baptize. Thus men of Cyprus and Cyrene proceeded to Antioch with the gospel. Thus Apollos, without the hands of any apostle, evangelist or presbyter, preached at Alexandria, Ephesus and Corinth. As it had been for ages before that the people of every synagogue listened to the man who came along with the gift and demonstration of a prophet, so now it would be that every congregation would listen to the teaching of any man who came along with the power of a Pentecostal endowment. The mantle of commission fell and rested on all that were "endued with power from on high." The apostles and the people were alike on that high level of participation.

(3) The relation of ordinary ministers to the people of the Church at large purports the same level in every age. They belong to the whole Church as servants, apostle and presbyter alike: "Ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake;" "All things are yours, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, all are yours." But charters of title do not belong—exclusively, at least—to servants: heritage especially in all the laws of descent is the portion of children rather than of servants. It is the principal, and not the agent or the factor, who possesses abso-

lute title to the premises on which the servant is found. All the apostles who have written to us at all press the analogy too strongly to have had the sentiment of superiority in the franchise of preaching.

(4) This view of the commission, that it rests with the constituency more than with the ministers or the rulers of the church who exercise it, was held in the first two centuries after the apostles. "All Christians," said Tertullian, "are made priests of Christ; so that when these are gathered together they make a church, though they be all laymen. And where no clergymen are present laymen may baptize and celebrate the eucharist, the distinction between clergy and laity being only by the Church." Loose and radical as such expressions may appear, and peculiar to that old enthusiast, there is unquestionably indicated the fact that in the second century the people were competent to put forth preachers for themselves when it was considered necessary in privation or defection.

(5) The same opinion was held by leaders of the great Reformation. "It hath been said," says Luther, "that the pope, the bishops, the priests and those who dwell in convents form the spiritual state, and that the princes, nobles, citizens and peasants form the secular state, or laity. This is a fine story indeed, but let no one be misled by it. All Christians belong to the spiritual state, and there is no other difference among them than that of the functions they discharge. If any pious laymen were banished to a desert, and, having no regularly-constituted priest among them, were to agree to choose to that office one of their own number, married or unmarried, this man would be as truly a priest as if he had been consecrated by all the bishops in the world.

Cyprian was chosen very much in this way. Hence it follows that laity and priests, princes and bishops, have in reality nothing to distinguish them but their functions. They all belong to the same state, but all have not the same work to perform."

(6) Reformation of the Church is made without embarrassment on this platform of ultimate right and power in the people who compose it. Reserved to the body of the faithful, it avails much to prevent corruption and restore the integrity of truth and manners when short of total apostasy. No sacrament of orders nor mystic impartation from man to man of something which one party has and another has not, no drivelling touch of robed officials on the forehead or the palm, was needed in transmitting to future ages that august commission which a risen Redeemer laid on the bosom of hundreds at Jerusalem or on the mountain of Galilee, or both, it may have been, with the emphasis of his own sublime repetition. Such is the vital importance of suffrage in the people and its peculiar significance at the foundations of Christianity.

The fourth immunity of church-members, or special privilege to which they are formally admitted in baptism, is the exercise of gifts according to the respective endowment by the Head of the Church: "Unto every one of us is grace given, according to the measure of the gift of Christ." Ascension-gifts are still continued in the body of Christ, both visible and invisible, and these are not confined to those who are in office even by the calling of God and the vote of the people; an endless variety may be found among the unofficial members themselves. And these are not to be repressed for want of office, but rather cherished and

stimulated by office-bearers—conditioned on "decency and order" at all times and in every place. The special prerequisite here is subordination to constituted authority. Exercised in that private and social sphere which, instead of infringing upon the public functions of ministers and elders, supplies largely the lack of their service, and so upholds their hands and confirms their influence, these varied gifts of the people are of indispensable usefulness to the best welfare of the Church.

Indeed, they have often cradled the Church, both in Europe and in America. A mother in Virginia, at the side of such a cradle, gave to the ministry Samuel Davies, whose gifts and eloquence won so much renown in both hemispheres before he was thirty-six years old, when he died. The General Assembly in Scotland, A. D. 1641, passed the following minute: "Our Assembly also commendeth godly conference at all occasional meetings; or as God's providence may dispose, as the word of God commandeth; provided none invade the pastor's office, to preach the word, who is not called thereunto, by God and his Church." This enactment, centuries old, describes the happy mean which Presbyterianism has held in all countries between the exclusive arrogance of a caste in prelacy and the radical confusion of a mere society in independency. We have never experienced much practical difficulty on the subject of lay-preaching, while both these systems have found its just limits exceedingly hard to define. The following immunities may not be denied to the people:

1st. To search the Scriptures for themselves, with full warrant to believe that a prayerful and humble exercise of private judgment may attain to a saving knowledge of doctrine and duty by this means alone. The use of

the Scriptures, with the right of private judgment, is really a grant made to all men who can read or hear them read beyond the boundaries of church-membership. The Bible is for the globe we inhabit, and its instinct of life eternal cannot be "bound" nor kept from floating with its leaves for "the healing of the nations" wherever the winds of heaven may waft the commerce of the world. But, as it is to the visible Church the oracles of God have been committed in trust for preservation and promulgation, they are given with covenant promise and blessing to her baptized generations, without distinction of office, age or sex, to read and understand for themselves individually. So sensitive is the freedom of this right in our system that the General Assembly has refused more than once the proposition to have an authorized commentary on the Holy Scriptures, though teeming with interpreters capable and faithful enough for the task. The right of every member to read and understand for himself is founded—(1) On the divine command. Deut. vi. 6, 7; Ps. i. 2; John v. 39; Col. iii. 16; 2 Pet. i. 19, and other places too numerous to be cited. (2) Also on the name and nature of the word as a testament, it being a manifest injustice that any heir should not be allowed to read for himself the will of his own Father and Elder Brother. (3) On the nature of the Church as a free community, it being absurd that any member of such community should be hindered from reading for himself its charter and constitution. (4) On the usage of the Church under all dispensations, including, of course, the concessions of Catholic Fathers themselves, Clement, Origen, Chrysostom, Basil, Cyprian, Augustine and Jerome—all, without exception, that shone with lustre in churchly consecration and had any learning

and piety and candor in the earlier ages of post-apostolic Christianity.

There has never been objection to this popular use of Holy Scripture which the book itself does not answer with luminous and emphatic reply. Is it said the people are not capable of understanding it? The answer is, "It opens the eyes of the blind" and "makes wise the simple." Is it said that it is not sufficient to lead men to the knowledge of all truth and duty, in every age? It answers, "The law of the Lord is perfect," "able to make men wise unto salvation," "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished to all good works." Is it said that an endless diversity and confusion must come if every man be authorized to interpret for himself? The Bible declares and makes it clear: "There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism." And all observation confirms it that among all evangelical men there is unity of faith in what saves and sanctifies the soul.

2d. Unofficial members have the privilege of trying their teachers and rulers by the word of God in their hands. Hence the many injunctions to "take heed how ye hear," to "try the spirits" and "beware of false prophets:" "I speak as to wise men, judge ye what I say." Hence, also, the commendation of the Bereans for searching among themselves to know the truth of what was preached to them even in apostolic times of preaching. This right, like the first, is private: each man judges for himself and not for others, nor for the Church at large, to sow dissension or disturb the peace. Our Saviour bade his followers hear the Pharisees because they sat in Moses' seat, and yet how pointedly did he

bid them beware of the doctrine of the Pharisees! So this right is not inconsistent with the proper authority of teachers, and dissenting members will be constrained to exercise charity and forbearance in the freest enjoyment of private opinions.

3d. A third exercise of gift by all members of the Church is mutual exhortation, conference, social interchange of speaking, on doctrine, duty and experience in the life of believers. In degenerate times of the Old-Testament ecclesia this kind of exercise among the faithful was commended with signal approbation of the Most High: "Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another; and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him, for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name." Mal. iii. 7. This mutual interchange of speech is enjoined upon New-Testament believers in multiplied forms of urgency, as if the universal "priesthood" now were universally commissioned to teach and preach. They are to exhort one another daily, to instruct the ignorant, to warn the unruly, to restore the fallen, to reconcile the variant, to comfort the feeble-minded and support the weak,—in short, like Eldad and Medad of old, to prophesy in the camp, and not the tabernacle, so usefully as to make faithful ministers exclaim, like Moses, "Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put his Spirit upon them!" Yet, as "Joshua the son of Nun" would have had them forbidden, many wise and good men of this day are given to similar envy and repression. It is necessary, therefore, to ascertain the limits over which the exercised people would "invade the pastor's office."

1. They are not to affect the exercise of a gift which

they do not possess, and in attempting all duties of the heavenly calling, with the best of their abilities, they are not to wait on anything with constant effort for which, after fair experiment, they are manifestly unqualified.

2. They are not to be sole judges of the gifts they possess. These must be recognized by the pastor, elders or people as good for edification, and failures should be so judged by others, when they indicate only diffidence or inexperience, as to encourage them to renewed efforts in the direction which they desire to pursue. This recognition by others may be tentative only, as in the training of persons for office in the Church. In the earlier ages of Christianity the bishop, or pastor of a particular church, would often call forth to preach a layman whom he deemed qualified. When Origen, of the third century, was approved in preaching to the people before his investment with orders by Alexander, bishop of Jerusalem, Demetrius, bishop of Alexandria, who was disaffected toward Origen, protested against it as irregular and unlawful; but Alexander, in his turn, cited a large number of facts in which laymen had been called to preach for an occasion by officers of the church when they were considered fit and capable enough, or when their capability was to be tested, or even when the regular minister was sick and the people would otherwise be destitute or disappointed (Bingham's *Antiquities*, book xiv. ch. 4). The teachers of that famous catechetical school at Alexandria—the first theological seminary in Christendom—were laymen, according to the statement of Jerome, through a long succession from Origen, and men were made doctors of divinity before they were licensed to preach. In the subsequent centuries the authorities of the Church had much more trouble with

the monks about preaching without license than they have in this generation with theological students. The whole force of a rising hierarchy was required to keep the monks in silence, especially as they soon became wiser than their teachers, and after ages of conflict, near the dawn of the great Reformation, the monks known as "preaching friars" triumphed, and became popularly called the "regular clergy," while their adversaries in the contest were left to be called the "secular clergy." But the sentiment of the ancient Church against the preaching of religious drones revives in all the churches of the Reformation, leading us to notice a third limitation in the exercise of gifts, grounded on revelation and reason both.

3. No unofficial member of the church is authorized to forsake his lawful calling in the world by which he provides things needful to the present life and supports his family, if he has any, for the sake of living by the exercise of his gifts in the Church, without being formally or informally appointed by officers representing the people in assemblies of adult membership. The progress of the Church and the many sides of her work may often require the common sense and business adaptations of unofficial men to serve her in important interests, but let them be called by church authority, without obtrusive management in seeking place.

CHAPTER VI.

OFFICERS OF THE CHURCH.

ALTHOUGH the Church of Christ, consisting of members more than orders and including officers of all sorts in the common right of suffrage with the membership, may choose their own teachers and rulers, this freedom of choice can range only within the nominations made by our Lord himself in the communication of his grace to candidates, enduing them with capacity and the requisite "knowledge and piety." His calling is described in his word as both gift and arrangement. He "gave" and "hath set" "some in the Church," importing not only bestowal as a favor, but limitation of function to its proper sphere according to his own constitution. (See Eph. iv. 11; 1 Cor. xii. 28.) The people govern themselves by representation, but this representation must be governed by the word of God. Officers are representatives of God to men and of men to God—not as mediators or priests at all, but as ministers in dispensing the provisions of a covenant between God and man and interceding for man as they are enabled by the Holy Ghost. They come from the people, they serve the people, are like them in submission, faith, hope, infirmity and fear, and yet there is no line of demarcation in the body of Christ so distinct as that between officers and members of the Christian Church. They are set apart with distinctive names,

have distinctive duties to perform, have special rewards of faithfulness to look for, and have peculiar claims on the esteem, obedience and support of the people. All attempts of spiritual despotism to rub out the distinction by making the people nothing but ignorant slaves, and, on the other hand, of mystic enthusiasm to dispense with all ordained authority as a burden and hindrance, have either declined to utter apostasy or vanished away from the face of Christendom.

The Reformed classification of New-Testament officers into the two, extraordinary and ordinary, may be made more exact and complete in three, named the ministry of witnesses, the ministry of gifts and the ministry of orders. The first were transient; the second, partly transient in the discontinuance of preternatural gifts; and the third, permanent. The *first* were personally called to be companions of Christ in the flesh, to be taught by his own life and qualified by the testimony of their own senses to be his witnesses to all men of what they had seen and heard of him. The *second* were endowed by the Holy Ghost with extraordinary gifts in the Pentecostal effusion, and commissioned thereby, with little or no anterior tuition, to go forth on the same errand as the apostles—teaching, testifying, wonder-working, without formal ordination of man, the sovereignty of the Master not being committed in his word either to give or not to give such ministers again. The *third* were the elders of the Old-Testament ecclesia, continued as they were in organization and worship by the Spirit of the New-Testament dispensation, and wherever the synagogues continued without conversion churches were gathered anew by the ministries of reconciliation and modelled instantly after the fashion of the

old economy. (See, again, Acts ii. 47; also Tit. i. 5.) We have the *origin* of the reconstruction of every office but that of elder mentioned in New-Testament history, and yet no office is more familiarly and constantly noticed in the history. Even the apostles Peter and John take special care to inform us they are elders also when uttering the dictates of apostleship. These three classes of ministers were simultaneously in the field, therefore, each one including to a certain extent the other two, and all harmoniously sustaining and confirming each other at the foundations of Christianity in the world.

1. The Apostles, or Ministry of Witness.

The manifestation of the Spirit, glorious at all times, in working with the Church on earth, signalized the Pentecostal epoch in three particulars: a profusion of gifts, and consequent display of functions, in greater variety than was ever vouchsafed before or since; an elevation of the whole Church to the same degree of consecration by his power—old men and young men, sons and daughters, servants and handmaids—according to the prophecy of Joel (ii.); and an extraordinary mission of witnesses, who were waiting for power from on high to spread the tidings of a finished redemption, deponing their special observation of the facts on which it is based and organizing the results of their persuasion with formal establishment of churches. These missionaries our Lord himself had named apostles (Luke vi. 13) when he was particular in choosing twelve in number.

The term "apostle," like other names for New-Testament officers of Greek derivation is brought from com-

mon to special use in a threefold transmutation of the word—the adjective sense, the appellative and the proper technical signification. We have this word in its simple adjective meaning in John xiii. 16 and Phil. ii. 25—"one sent" in the former, "messenger" in the latter. We have the intermediate shade of appellative application in Acts xiv. 4, 14, where Barnabas and Paul, sent together on a mission by the church at Antioch, and by the Holy Ghost, are called "apostles" in the course of their errand. We have the same application to official brethren in general translated properly "messenger" in 2 Cor. viii. 23, and in Heb. iii. 1 its application is made to Christ himself—"the Apostle and High Priest of our profession." The prevailing use of the word in Scripture is the third in its almost uniform application to the twelve, and so distinct as to confound the *finesse* of modern logic, which for a purpose to be noticed hereafter mixes up all three senses in order to give a multitude of successors this great name of a small, unique, transcendent order who finished their special work in one generation and went to their reward. Although their works do follow them, these are in records and letters which are seldom read by priest-ridden people for themselves. Cathedral pomp displays their statues in the highest niches of man's building, and the proudest pinnacle and crest under heaven is called "apostolic;" yet the visions of a new heaven and a new earth, and a "holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God," reveal this high order only on the foundations, and "in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb." The highest glory of man in the Church of God is to work at the base, and when our work is done to have it, like our life itself, "hid with Christ in God."

The true apostolic mission is read in the qualifications of this order expressly given us in the Scriptures.

1. An apostle must have seen the Lord with bodily eye, and have been an eye-and-ear witness of what the gospel announces of fact in relation to Christ. Acts i. 21, 22; xxii. 14, 15; 1 Cor. ix. 1; xv. 8; 1 John i. 3.

2. He must have received his commission immediately from the Lord, without the intervention of man. Luke vi. 13; Gal. i. 1. Even after the ascension of our Lord, at the election of Matthias the ordaining prayer was, "Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, show whether of these two thou hast chosen." The intervention of Ananias in the case of Saul at Damascus was only to receive his sight and be filled with the Holy Ghost and hear: "The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his will, and see that Just One, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth."

3. He must have had infallible inspiration in applying Old-Testament scripture and writing New-Testament revelation, historical and doctrinal. Gal. i. 11, 12; Acts xxviii. 23; John xx. 22; 1 Thess. ii. 13.

4. He must have had the power of working miracles. Acts ii. 43; 2 Cor. xii. 12.

6. The power, also, of conferring on others miraculous gifts. Acts viii. 17; xix. 6.

6. Universality of mission. Matt. xxviii. 19; 1 Cor. iv. 17; 2 Cor. xi. 28.

7. Paramount authority among all the churches. 1 Cor. vii. 17; John xx. 23; Luke xxii. 29, 30.

These qualifications in the aggregate made an apostle, and not one of them might be wanting. Other ministers might share in one or more of these marvellous

endowments, but only an apostle could unite them all. It has been alleged that the twelve were "named" apostles by our Lord before these preternatural powers were conferred, and therefore it is not necessary to limit the designation to that original band, their subsequent endowments and this name at the first being obviously separable and distinct. It is enough to reply that, although they were styled "apostles" at the first proleptically and formally, they were not so called afterward in the familiar companionship of Christ, but "disciples" usually, whether spoken of alone or in connection with other followers of the Master. Moreover, they were not *sent*, as the name intends, even as much as the seventy, who were confined to Judea in their mission, but kept for the most part immediately with the great Teacher himself, though exercising miraculous power even then, as the seventy did, who heralded the movements of Jesus and his school. It was only when actually endued with the promised power of the Holy Ghost—for which they tarried at Jerusalem—that they became apostles indeed and in every sense of the name.

The assemblage of qualifications would indicate every important object and end of the office in laying the foundations of the Christian Church by their testimony for the whole world and for all time, but foundations had been laid before they came, and these were neither superseded nor altered. The consummate skill of apostolical organization consisted largely in recognizing what patriarchs and prophets had transmitted of forms, and in perpetuating these. The temple, the altars, the priesthood, being typical shadows, must pass away when the substance of all had been realized gloriously. Duality

of service at the sanctuaries must now be unity in the ecclesiastical institute. Our "synagogue," as the apostle James called a particular Christian church, must unite before its congregation, reading, prayer, preaching, singing, giving and sacrament in public service there, instead of dividing with tabernacle or temple any more a distinctive portion of appointed worship. But, on the other hand, the duality of covenants must remain as they were distinguished in the days of David, the conditional and the unconditional—that is, the family covenant and its enlargement ecclesiastically, conditioned on the individual faith and obedience of the participants in every generation, and the everlasting covenant of grace, conditioned on the vicarious and perfect obedience of Messiah himself. Beyond these elementary and seminal postulates, which the apostles explain so clearly in their Epistles, and the accompanying descent of eldership in officering the churches they planted, the errand of this highest order that ever appeared in the Christian ecclesia could not have been governmental construction or direction, excepting as of secondary importance in aiding them to bear witness and in sustaining their testimony uncorruptible and perpetual.

The great end of apostolic mission was witness-bearing, and almost every ordination with hands laid on occurred as incidental to the missionary drift of their powers and their lives. But the express declarations of Holy Scripture settle this point beyond a question, and he may run that readeth them. When the Lord was "risen indeed" and held his last interview with the eleven at Jerusalem a little before his ascension, and concisely reviewed the tenor of his teaching and the fulfilment of Scripture in the facts of his life and pas-

sion, he declares to them, "And ye are witnesses of these things." Luke xxiv. 48. After the ascension, "when the day of Pentecost was fully come" and they were "endued with power from on high," "Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice" to recount, just as his Master had done at the closing interview, the fulfilment of prophecy in the history of Jesus, and exclaimed, "Whereof we all are witnesses." Not a word was uttered on that day of "power" about apostolic authority or paramount rule in their commission. Acts ii. 32. Afterward, when "many signs and wonders" attended this witness-bearing, wrought among the people "by the hands of the apostles," persisting in the same strains of Scripture to preach Christ in the face of violence and persecution, the same preacher proclaimed, "And we are witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him." Acts v. 32. Still not an utterance more about themselves or any claim to dominant power apart from their testimonies, even to organize the churches. And onward in sacred history, when Cornelius the centurion sent for Peter, and the immense field of Gentile conversion was opened to the vision of this Jewish preacher, and the problem of organization for the whole world of a synagogue eldership to assimilate the globe in one ecclesia would have filled his imagination if his main errand had been to found a grand apostolic see on the face of the earth,—even then we have the old story from his lips only as a witness: "And we are witnesses of these things, which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem, whom they slew and hanged on a tree: him God raised up the third day, and shewed him openly; not to all

the people, but unto witnesses chosen of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead." Acts x. 41.

It has been objected to this argument for testifying as the great end of the apostolic office, and power in it as altogether ministrative and subsidiary to this end, that Saul of Tarsus was made an apostle without having had the opportunity of personal intercourse with Christ, as the others had; but this case, on the contrary, is the strongest corroboration of all. So necessary was it for an apostle to be qualified to bear witness by seeing and hearing with his own senses that a miracle must be wrought in order to supply him with what others had enjoyed in a natural way. So Ananias affirmed, "The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his will, and see that Just One, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth. For thou shalt be his witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard." Acts xxii. 14, 15. When that gifted man was afterward in personal danger of being "pulled in pieces" for his testimony, "the night following the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome." Acts xxiii. 13. Did this revelation change at all the tenor of this witness for Christ? Did the destination to Rome wake ambition at all in the "free-born" citizen of that empire which governed the world, and that imperial city where power was everything, surcharged with polities for all religions and all provinces alike, or turn his thoughts to fitting polity for the Church, intending to profit in that line by the consignment to Rome? Not in the least. Before Agrippa it was all the same—the same story, the same testimony,

the same avowal of this errand, until he sailed for Italy. Acts xxvi.

Equality of the Apostles.

Parity of rank on every plane of office revealed in the Bible is undoubtedly the order intended by our exalted Saviour and Head of the Church. The adorable Trinity, in which the relations of Father, Son and Holy Ghost are set forth in familiar analogies to indicate a diversity of functions, are perfectly equal in power and glory, and it is not presumption to infer that equality among the most favored creatures of His Church would emanate with the "gifts for men" which our Lord received at his enthronement in heaven. The oneness of commission itself implies equality of rank among all that receive it. In reviewing, also, the assemblage of qualifications peculiar to the apostolic office the conclusion is inevitable that the apostles were equal to one another in dignity and in power. Like modern ministers holding the office of presbyter with perfect parity, some were more gifted or popular than others, while all were on a footing of perfect equality in official rank.

But the world has been confounded with the most exorbitant claim ever put forth for unequal and unbounded predominance of man over man, based upon alleged inequality in the band of apostles. Peter was made prince and the Church was built on him and by him as vicegerent for Christ, say the papists; and the spiritual despotism which has darkened the annals of Christianity for more than twelve hundred years must be regarded as a fact of such fearful magnitude that we may not slight any pretence which seems to color with legitimacy a calamity so great. Unhappily, the student

has more than the philosophy of history to demand of him a thorough consideration of the figments on which this colossal usurpation is built. The hasty presumption that popery can wax no more, that it is dead at heart and living only at the extremities, and that its arguments are so obviously absurd as to need no labor of polemics in providing an armory against them, has doomed many an educated minister to bitter disappointment in the field, and contributed not a little to the continuance, and even to the aggression, of mediæval darkness on the light of civil and religious liberty. Let us patiently yet briefly contemplate this corner-stone of monarchy in church government—the primacy of Peter.

It is admitted that Peter had an eminence among the apostles, or a kind of precedence accorded to any man of strong character among his equals. One of the first to be called, and perhaps the oldest man of the number, ardent and impetuous in his nature, forward to speak and forward to act, and consequently admired by the multitude, so that we read of them bringing the sick and the palsied to the way on which he would pass that even his shadow might go over them,—on this account the early Fathers may have called him *princeps apostolorum* without meaning more than ancient scholars meant when they called Cicero *princeps oratorum* or Virgil *princeps poetarum*, or than we mean when we call Turretine, Owen or Edwards "prince of theologians." That nothing but a prominence of this kind was the superiority of Peter is argued—

(1) From the very nature of the office: it had no degrees either of infallibility or of power. Each apostle had the inspiration, the personal knowledge, of Christ, the universality of mission and the paramount authority

which made him a peer of the highest dignity conceivable in the Church—that of a consecrated witness and missionary of the cross.

(2) Peter himself never claimed this alleged supremacy. His pretended successors have always announced their authority as a matter of duty, and no earthly potentates can be compared with them in the jealousy of emphasis with which their claims are proclaimed. The beginning of a dynasty must, of course, make proclamation and define its prerogatives with all possible distinctness. As a good apostle he would magnify his office and secure heed to his instructions and orders by asserting the primacy conferred by the Master; but he never hinted such a thing in any speech or sermon or letter on occasions which would have called it out if it existed. *An* apostle, *a servant*, an elder, he calls himself on such occasions in those encyclical letters of his which are canonical and evidently reveal the utmost of his claims to rank and power in the Church.

(3) Peter's precedence is not mentioned by any other apostle. If he had been invested with superior authority, and was too self-denying to make it known, certainly others faithful and inspired would have taken some occasion to indicate his primacy in loyal compliance with the will of the Master in promoting him to be the worshipful source of ecclesiastical power on earth. But there is not a hint of any such deference, and there is much written that is incompatible with even a chief respectability in the college of apostles. Paul wrote, "I suppose, I was not a whit behind the very chiefest of apostles," "James, Cephas and John, who seemed to be pillars." Surely, these expressions level Peter and disparage him when he subjoins (Gal. ii. 11), "But

when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed." And he was blamed for "dissimulation," as the sequel of this quotation shows.

(4) The Master himself never mentioned the destined supremacy of Peter when he was particular to settle disputes about precedence among the disciples. On all occasions he rebuked ambition and any hope of pre-eminence in his kingdom (Matt. xx. 26; xxiii. 8); and no one was rebuked by him with such frequency and humiliating severity as was Peter: "Get thee behind me, Satan, thou art an offence to me; for thou savorest not the things that be of God; but the things that be of men." And how was the rash temper of this headlong disciple at fault when his Master exclaimed, "Put up thy sword into its place; for all they that take the sword shall perish by the sword"! The idea that such a follower was to be exalted over "the disciple whom Jesus loved" and all other disciples is from this point of view in which he stood before his Lord preposterous.

(5) No declaration of Scripture in any place confers this primacy. Incidental expressions besides the narrative are fatal to the claim, though silence alone would be repudiation. When catalogues of New-Testament gifts are given with minutest detail, apostles, as a co-equal band, are at the head, without distinction of any one. When parties arose among the people of Corinth, saying, "I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas, and I of Christ," the reprimand, "Is Christ divided?" pungently rebukes a factious adherence to one apostle more than to another as treason to Christ himself. The rock on which the monarchy of Peter is builded was viewed in the sublime visions of John, that

saw it through all the magnifying mists of intervening history as only one of twelve foundations which had the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb inscribed. Rev. xxi. 14.

(6) Miscellaneous facts are even yet more fatal to the claim. Peter fell during the arraignment of his Master in a manner of superlative atrocity and perpetual shame, denying him openly and profanely just after the keys had been given and he had protested unchangeable fidelity. The gates of hell prevailed against him at the first encounter and trial of his infallibility. At the election of Matthias he made a speech defining the proper qualifications of a candidate without the slightest dictation of authority in the appointment. The suffrages of the assembly and *their* invocation to the Head himself for direction show conclusively that neither Peter nor the people imagined a fountain of ecclesiastical power on earth could be in him or in all the eleven together. Again, at the election of deacons (Acts vi.), he does not figure individually at all. The twelve called the multitude together; the twelve laid on their hands alike in the ordination, and then alike gave themselves to prayer and to preaching.

Peter and John were *sent* together (Acts viii.) to inspect the work of Philip and establish the converts made by his preaching. Equals may be sent by equals in the way of delegation, but for a prince to be sent by subjects, and in a commission of entire equality with one of them, is incongruous and improbable.

At the council in Jerusalem (Acts xv.) James presided in the presence of Peter. The latter made the first address, but Barnabas and Paul also addressed the assembly, and it is recorded with emphasis that the

whole multitude kept silence in order to hear them. James spoke last, summing up the opinions of the council in his definitive sentence—a fact which no explanation can reconcile with the uniform arrogance of Peter's pretended successors at Rome, popes or legates.

Again, two other apostles have eminence alleged in Scripture before which that of Peter is pale. How patent is that of Paul in the volume of sacred history and all Christian tradition as author, scholar, logician, missionary and martyr! And John, the beloved disciple, who could lean on the bosom of the Saviour and ask him questions which no other disciple would venture to propose—who, though he fled with the others in a panic at the betrayal and apprehension of Jesus, would stand near the cross to invite the agonizing Christ to fix an eye on him for sympathy and commit to his care the tenderest earthly one, his mother! Mary was not confided to the guardianship of Peter. John survived all the other apostles, and lived longest to guide and establish the Church with forming hand. Thus we might easily put up rival claims for almost any of the band if we did not think it impious to disturb the parity which our Lord ordained.

With all this presumption against primacy in Peter so fairly made out in collating sacred records, we are met by one passage in the memorable colloquy of our Lord with Peter (Matt. xvi. 18)—a passage with which millions of the Christian name are made familiar without being allowed to read the Bible anywhere for themselves, and, being so detached, it is made plausible by a crafty exegesis: "And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church;

and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." In the original two words of similar form (*Πέτρος* and *πέτρᾳ*) are used for antithetical force in the play of words, or the rhetorical figure called paronomasia. Instead of "Peter" and "rock" meaning the same person or thing, there is the very opposite construction—antithesis between the two persons in this dialogue. One is Peter the apostle; the other is Christ himself. *Πέτρος* ("Peter") signifies a piece of rock or stone or fragment broken off, but *πέτρᾳ* ("rock") means the solid body of imbedded rock out of which stones are hewn or sepulchres carved, or in which caverns are made. And when we look for the uses of the demonstrative pronoun, *ταύτῃ* ("this") in the conversations of our Lord, it always means himself, not any other: "Destroy this temple and in three days, I will raise it up." John ii. 19. No human being throughout the Scriptures is called a rock; all inspiration reveals the Messiah alone as the Rock on which the Church is built. (See 1 Cor. iii. 11; 1 Pet. ii. 4, 5.) This interpretation was that of Augustine, Francis Turretine, and J. Addison Alexander, whose masterly exposition of Matt. xvi. should be studied with care as a model of exegesis.

Akin to this fair interpretation is that which prevailed among the Reformers to a considerable extent. The word *πέτρᾳ* ("rock") may refer to the confession made in the context preceding ver. 16: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." There is an intervening verse (17): "And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." This "Petrine confession," as Lange and others allege, is the "rock" on which the

Church is built. The *ταύτῃ* ("this") would, then, have to reach over an intervening antecedent to one more remote; but, though this often occurs, it is by exegetical necessity, of which there is none here, when Christ himself is the Rock.

If we take the sense given by Tertullian and Ambrose—that Peter himself is the rock intended here—and reduce the beautiful paronomasia to mere alliteration, then we must ask, Why did not our Lord say "thee" at once—"on *thee* will I build my Church"? It was not characteristic of his sacred lips to utter the jingle of alliteration. Yet those Fathers did not dream of the monstrous interpretation which puts Peter in the place of Christ. It was only through the agency of Peter in building the Church, as predicted in the word *οἰκοδομήσω* ("I will build"), that these early Fathers considered his importance at the foundation of the Christian Church, and, accordingly, the striking fulfilment came when Peter was the first to preach, both to Jews and to Gentiles, under the power of Pentecostal charisms. The wonderful accessions by means of his preaching and that of others at the beginning are mentioned as *additions* to a Church already existing, called by the Spirit of inspiration *the* Church. Acts ii. 47. The gloss of popery would blot out the heritage of Hebrew Christianity and make the transition from Old Testament to New a stoppage on the Church line over which nothing can pass but a castaway hierarchy.

Cardinals of renown—Bellarmine and Wiseman—have pressed another plea for the primacy of Peter from the formula of his restoration to the grade of ordinary apostleship and the confidence of others after the shameful inconstancy with which he had denied his Lord and

Master. (See John xxi. 15, 16, where, on Peter's repeated answer to the solemn question, "Lovest thou me?" he was inaugurated pre-eminently, they say, in the signal words, "Feed my sheep," "Feed my lambs.") Strange that such dignitaries overlook Peter's own words in the construction of his pre-eminence (1 Pet. v. 1–4): "The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away." Every line of this quotation, without a comment, must refute Bellarmine and reduce the conceits of such interpreters.

2. Succession.

If no primacy can be admitted, under the light of God's word, in the college of the apostles, the derivation of it in history must be rejected as usurpation, and anti-Christian in its nature. Unhappily, however, the logic of usurped authority, both in Church and in State, becomes in the course of time arrogant as it is hoary and dogmatic as it is weak; and when the word of God is a sealed book to the people and no beginning there can be seen with their own eyes, they are pointed to the fabric itself, now gray with traditions, and thus made to believe that such a building must have had its "foundation in the holy mountains." It is, then, a part of our task to refute in detail the inconsequence as well as the original premises. A ministry of witnessing, as we

have seen that of the apostles to be, is in its nature contemporaneous with the facts themselves attested, and therefore essentially transient. Here we might fairly desist from the discussion which comes down the lines of alleged transmission, but vain tradition hinders a brevity like this. Two schemes of apostolic succession meet us here—the popish and the prelatic, monarchy and aristocracy—in Church government. The one claims one line from Peter alone; the other, as many lines as there were apostles and have been prelates.

Respecting the former, the Romish claim, we have already seen that the first principle of it, the supremacy of Peter, is untenable in the light of Holy Scripture, and no derivation from him, of course, can be traced in the Bible or authentic history. We now affirm that even if Peter had the pre-eminence in sacred history it died with himself; it could not have been transmitted—

1. Because the Scriptures are silent on the subject. Whether they be received as the only rule of faith and practice or not, silence on the point is fatal, because, next to the being of a God and the mission of his Son, the most important article of Christianity is not mentioned on their pages at this view of Church polity. The Bible gives us minor offices with minuteness of detail—the prophets, evangelists, elders, deacons and deaconesses—but not a word respecting this great office, the fountain of all ecclesiastical office or authority upon earth, a feature masked on Christianity which alters alike its aspect, its nature, its liberty, life and blessedness. Indeed, "the names of blasphemy" seem to be inscribed on this succession when standard polemics would say "our Lord God the pope," and such a

champion as Bellarmine would die leaving in legacy "half his soul to the Virgin Mary, and the other half to her Son, Jesus Christ." Surely, if such be Christian religion, the inspired records would not have been silent on what we say of its incredibility.

If history were luminous and authentic on the actual transmission of this line, there might be some color of claim in the tradition; but history never presented a more vexed and still unsettled question than that of a legitimate papacy. Who is the pope, when so many chances may have broken the descent, and so many severances have sundered the chain and made successions but spurious till the end of time? Who is he in history, when one man is enthroned by cardinals and another by a mob at Rome, or when the conclave has elected one and the king of France or the emperor of Germany another? Which is pope, when one is mitred at Rome and the other at Avignon, or when the triple crown is seized with triple hands and the world is shaken by the noise of three thunders all equally infallible and equally fatal to the head of a rival? Man's salvation, according to this claim, depends on a problem in history which all candid research must give up in despair.

2. The express mention in Scripture of despotic usurpation to come after the apostles have left the stage, predicted in the prophecies of Daniel, the Epistles of Paul and the visions of John in Patmos, and described as "anti-Christian," "the mystery of iniquity," "that wicked," "that man of sin, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he, as God, sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he

is God." 2 Thess. ii. 4. Whether we apply the description to this papal rise and succession or not, the argument is good against it, for the Bible would surely inform us of the true power when denouncing the false, and refer us to legitimate authority when warning us against the illegitimate, as it does continually in the pledge and promise of Christ for his presence and power alway, even to the end. Otherwise, the Holy Scriptures would be a directory for the Church inferior even to the statutes of men in the common codes and proclamations of State.

3. Such a succession destroys New-Testament liberty. Nothing is more abundantly revealed than superior liberty under this latter dispensation, freedom from the yoke and burdens which our fathers were not able to bear, the handwriting of ordinances, cumbrous ritual and stringent authority of a carnal priesthood. But no domination in the priesthood of old can be compared for spiritual despotism with this power, whose coming upon the Church has been "with all deceivableness of unrighteousness." As early as the fourth century, when his power was but incipient and the superstitious bands he has gathered lay scattered about with no one master to fasten them, Augustine said the yoke laid upon the Jews was more supportable than that upon the Christians of his day.

4. It destroys even apostolic prestige. If Peter had a vicegerent supremacy, continued in his alleged successors, the first of these, according to one of the conflicting catalogues of Roman bishops, must have been Linus, a name unknown in Scripture and subsequent history except the catalogue alone. John lived some thirty years after Peter, writing canonical Scripture and

entitled as much as any of the apostles had been to exercise paramount authority in all the churches; but he is, of course, to be subject to any obscure head in this succession while he survives, and bound to submit himself, his acts and his revelations to the Index of some Linus, Clement, Cletus or Anacletus.

5. It supersedes the use of inspired Scriptures. Peter himself was busy before his demise in furnishing words of inspiration for the guidance of the Church after he should put off his tabernacle, intimating in the plainest manner that the Holy Scriptures, and not any living man or succession of men, were to follow him in his extraordinary or apostolical authority: "Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up, by putting you in remembrance; knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me. Moreover I will endeavor that ye may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance." 2 Pet. i. 13–15. Obviously, there can be no apostolical succession but that of one generation to another, holding in remembrance the testimony of apostles placed on record by themselves and the inspiration which indited that record. A succession of fallible or infallible men to dictate what we must believe and what we must do dispenses with a written word for such a purpose, and naturally, therefore, becomes indifferent to this word and intent on hiding and chaining it when the chief thing to be believed and to be done perpetually—their own apostolate—is not even hinted on its pages.

6. Such a succession also usurps the office and work of the Holy Spirit. Another agent stands up to take of the things which are Christ's and show them to us.

Another paraclete appears to comfort the Church and carry on the development of her life and germs of faith and practice committed to her culture. Another authority calls men to the ministry, trains them, furnishes them for work and sends them to the field of their destination. Another test of union to Christ than the graces of the Spirit claims the devout aspirations of the faithful—the acknowledgment of this incarnate legitimacy which ignores the fruit of the Spirit as evidence of its own valid transmission. In this connection it becomes that corporate apostasy described in Heb. vi. 4–8: "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame." Let history come and here offer an exegesis which might remove a controversy between Calvinist and Arminian embarrassing to both—between the saints' perseverance and the restoration of backsliders, individually considered. It is the noun of multitude, the body ecclesiastical, the close corporation, which perpetuates itself beyond recall, that specially hazards the "impossible" here.

7. Such a succession usurps the office of Christ himself, substituting a carnal vicegerency for the spiritual presence of our Lord promised to be everywhere and alway. No created being, man or angel, could bear upon his shoulder what this monarchy affects. To be the vicegerency of Christ, as it pretends, there must be much of omniscience and omnipotence conferred upon

mortals—to know the condition of every church, the head and heart of every minister, and even the invisible designs of earth and hell against the Church. There must be, also, the transfer of every other kind of authority made subsidiary in the hands of our exalted Lord, such as the Government of governments, King of kings and Lord of lords for the supreme safety and welfare of the Church. The arrant pretensions of Hildebrand in his "dictates" are fair and logical inferences of great moderation at this view. Popes Innocent and Adrian are specimens of meekness, and to make a hostler of an emperor at the stirrup of His Holiness did but signify the paramount dominion of a chief priest in Christendom. And, far beyond this political supremacy, there must be moral power in such imperial pretension derived from Christ, in whom it is infinite—power to turn the hearts of men at his pleasure and make them willing in the day of his power—else infallibility is not Christian at all, and is foiled in its efforts and impotent in its aim. Surely the crown of Jesus cannot rest upon the mitre of such ambition!

The papal doctrine of succession has to be refuted in three premises of the system: (1) The original primacy of Peter; (2) The transmission of it through successive generations; and (3) The identification of it in the line of bishops at Rome. In considering the absurdity of such transmission anywhere we could not avoid some special reference to this descent by way of illustration, for the Latin line is the only Western one extant, and ever loud and aggressive, both in history and in observation, to challenge our attention. We should, therefore, now consider briefly this third point. If Peter had a pre-eminence conferred by his Master in the

midst of the twelve, and this pre-eminence descended by divine appointment anywhere, it cannot have come down in the channel of Roman bishops—

1. Because Peter was never at Rome at all, so far as sacred history has made his record. This reveals minutely his travels and labors in witnessing for Christ—his visits to Samaria, Lydda, Joppa, Cæsarea, etc.—and never a word of his visit to Rome, a destination compared with which all other acts and travels of all the apostles were unimportant details if the assumption of a mere tradition that he went there on any other errand than to die were true. Paul went to Rome, and the same historian gives to this fact a conspicuous record. That great apostle himself in his extensive correspondence from and to Rome never mentions Peter, while he names many others entitled to honor as fellow-laborers in planting the gospel there. If Peter was absent on account of persecution or on the business of a vicegerent, why does he not write to them, as Cyprian afterward did when driven from his flock by the sword of violence? Not even a Romish tradition exists of such pastoral fidelity. The letters he did write make no mention of Rome in either the address, the date or the body of a letter. The place from which one was written is Babylon, where he had gone as the apostle of the circumcision, it being the centre of Jewish influence and numbers from the time of Daniel to that of the Talmud. The date of this Epistle is reckoned fairly to have been within the year 60, and on its pages we learn that he had been previously engaged in Asia, Pontus, Bithynia and Cappadocia. About the year 51 he must have been at the council of apostles and elders in Jerusalem, and could not have been at Rome previously; for the inspired

narrative fills up the time with his labors elsewhere. Between 51 and 60 he must have been at Antioch, where history assigns at least five years of his life, and most papal writers say seven. The other three or four years of his life, at most, in this interval, must have been little enough time to make the great circuit of his acquaintance through Asia Minor embraced in the address of his letters. We must look for his residence at Rome, therefore, after the year 60, at which date, probably, his First Epistle was written from Babylon. He could not have been there within the first four years after that date, for, not to speak of the great distance and delay of such a journey, stopping on his way so much to confirm the believers in every city, we must put down the presence of Paul at Rome within this period—say the year 62, which is generally assigned for his arrival there. Peter could not have been there before Paul arrived and not be mentioned at all among the others who had planted the gospel there and met Paul at Appii forum. And for the same reason he could not have been there for the next two years, during which Paul dwelt in his own hired house. We have but three years of Peter's life remaining—from 64 to 67—in which it would seem possible for him to have been at Rome at all. But these three years were the time of persecution begun by Nero in 64—the very date of martyrdom to him and Paul together given in the reckoning of many on this mere tradition. Yet, adding three years more, the later date of 67 might have given him opportunity, like Paul, to bear witness for Christ at Rome also, but surely could have given him no possibility in that storm of founding and regulating an apostolic see for all generations.

2. Admitting, however, that Peter did fix at Rome the seat of his authority, he could not have been at the foundation of that imperial Church. The Epistles of Paul put it beyond a doubt that others had begun the organization at Rome, and he must have built on other men's foundation and been himself a successor in the line originating there.

3. Admitting, again, that Peter could have been there as an apostolic bishop and first bishop too, why should the line he started at Rome be preferred to the line he started at Antioch, where he must have labored in the vigor and prime of apostolic virtue, and far longer time than conjecture could allow him at Rome?

4. The successors at Rome never claimed this supremacy of power in the earlier centuries. Late as the close of the sixth century Gregory the Great—by no means backward to assert prerogatives—declared, in opposition to the claim of primacy by John the Faster at Constantinople, that for any man to pretend authority over all Christendom was of the devil, anti-Christian and accursed.

5. Others would not concede it for centuries after the claim was made. The reluctance of thrones and mitres, councils, universities, and even of cloisters, the confusion of its champions among themselves in every attempt to define the rights and limits of this papal ascendency, fill the largest page of mediæval history and prove that it was a novel usurpation. Infallibility faltered all the way down to the Council of Trent. Liberius subscribed the Arian heresy, Zosimus condemned, approved, sanctioned and cursed the Pelagian faith with as many turns as he had visits from the heretic or letters from Augustine. Vigilius changed his faith five times at the nod of

an emperor, and Honorius to this day lies accursed as a heretic by the Sixth General Council and the voice of his own successors.

6. The supremacy of the Roman see may be explained as a matter of fact without the hypothesis of a line from Peter. It is neither philosophical nor religious to give more causes than are sufficient to account for any phenomenon. Church history points out the ways in which this arrogance advanced to its acme of power. It was the only apostolic see in the West, and took advantage of this unity as umpire in controversies, which were incessant among the bishops of the East, and led them to lay Greek mitres at the feet of this one Latin pope. Its position at the Imperial City, so convenient for alliance with civil and military power, the dexterity of pontiffs in surviving the wreck of empire and winning to themselves the veneration with which Goths and Vandals and Lombards had regarded their own chief Druid—in short, the whole series of causes in religious quarrel, political finesse and fortunate concurrence of opportunities for aggrandizement—will not allow us for a moment to feel the need of any virtue from St. Peter to account for the enormity of spiritual despotism.

7. Wickedness in this line forfeits the claim of apostolic virtue: a vicious man cannot be a lawful bishop, even of Rome. If there be one fundamental canon of the ministry more sacred than another, it is forfeiture of function for immorality. The Church that will not enforce the penalty and estop the tradition just there must be cast away and her succession doomed, like that of Thyatira. All men must know that immoral men are integral links of this ecclesiastical chain at Rome—not thereby unchurching Latin Christianity, but assuredly interrupt-

ing saintship and making spurious the ordinations from such polluted hands, wherever, at least, "committing" to faithful and able men is held to be the communication of something which one man has, and another has not, of spiritual gift. Even after civilization and letters had redeemed the people from torpor and death a debauched Alexander, a bloody Julius and an atheistic Leo, in almost immediate succession to one another, carried on the line.

8. The impossibility of tracing this line. Not to dwell on the embarrassment which irregular elections and violent expulsions and simoniacal bargains and acrimonious divisions and protestation of councils have occasioned the canon law in folios of doubt which fill the shelves of the Vatican, let us take the most reasonable and simple of all methods—bring the opposite ends of the line together and judge of its genuine continuity. When it began the people elected the bishop of Rome and fellow-presbyters laid on their hands in ordination. Now a few cardinals of scarlet hat and purpled mantle choose him in a conclave, and more than the ceremony of kingly coronation must be had for his inauguration. At first the husband of one wife, having faithful children, a man not self-willed, not soon angry, not given to filthy lucre, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate, was the man qualified for that pastorate, guiding the flock, confessing Christ and taking the martyr's crown. Now a withered ascetic, forbidding to marry, having children like Cæsar Borgia, if any, whose self-will is infallibility itself, angered at every change of politics and the shadow of indifference to his own prerogatives, draining the wealth of kingdoms to fill his insatiable coffers, a persecuting enemy to good men who

think for themselves, intolerant, unjust and depraved to any extent his habits may lead him,—this is the man if he is a native Italian and not refused by France and Spain. Between such characters who can run a line or believe that the primitive and the modern incumbent are in the same continuity of ordination and possessing the same credibility as witnesses for Christ and "governments" for the Church?

Thus it is evident that the tripartite fabric of papal usurpation cannot stand the test of either Scripture or history. Peter had no primacy conferred on him; and if he had, it could not have been transmitted, and if transmitted anywhere it cannot be identified in the succession of pontificates at Rome. But, whilst we thus reject the whole structure of papal supremacy and the sacerdotal ministration it claims, the people under such a yoke are not to be unchurched with wholesale derelict-tion. Myriads have found salvation beneath the pall of popish night because of grace abounding, and how far the alchemy of saving grace will extract sweetness from the carcass of rotten superstition and cunning priest-craft God only knows. There is "nothing too hard for the Lord;" let ours be the task of restoring a different system, which will open the facilities of being saved, and saved well, "to the uttermost," and yet a system old as the call and the covenant of Abraham.

CHAPTER VII.

PRELATICAL SUCCESSION.

THE great Reformation from popery was arrested in both of its main branches, Lutheran and Reformed, at the reconstruction of a ransomed Church, by the jealousies of civil monarchy. The affinity of thrones to hierarchy is natural and historical because of the mutual support they are seen to afford each other, and especially where Church and State are united in constitution. Yet the concession made by Reformers to gradations of rank in the government of the Church was merely political in its nature, without the slightest claim of divine right or scriptural sanction for hierarchy in Sweden, Denmark or England. Cranmer, archbishop of Canterbury—called by historians "founder of the English Church"—is said to have tendered the resignation of his office at the demise of his king, so much did he consider the primacy of England a political promotion rather than apostolical heritage. All the British Reformers viewed Anglican prelacy in the same light—as a civil more than as a religious polity—until near the close of the sixteenth century. Then, after Richard Bancroft (archbishop of Canterbury, 1604) preached the divine right of bishops against the validity of Genevan, Dutch, Scotch and French orders and wherever only one order of the ministry was held, and almost simultaneously with this

departure Thomas Cartwright was ejected from his professorship at Cambridge for opposition to three orders and the Liturgy, with his known authorship of the "Martin-Mar-Prelate" literature, Presbyterianism was unchurched, and the course of prelacy from its original basis of political expedience had henceforth to lodge itself in papal glossology and call its highest order apostolical.

We may well wonder that the enlightened Protestant Episcopal Church of England and America, as it continues the style and exclusiveness of Bancroft, could overlook the mission of apostles to bear witness for Christ, and not to rule at all except as it is merely incidental and subservient to preaching the gospel, and that our missionaries to the heathen, at home and abroad, are the most apostolic of all modern ministers. The keys of the kingdom were indeed committed to all the apostles alike, but it was expressly for the purpose of "opening and shutting"—bringing in and adding to the Church (already organized) "such as should be saved" by means of their testimony, and shutting out the false, ignorant and immoral by the exercise of that discipline which consisted in the application of the word to the offences of men, and in which they called upon the people to assist them and do it themselves in the absence of the apostles, as Paul authorized the Corinthians to do. Power was a reserve in their Head himself, and the streams of mission among men must never make a reservoir in men themselves: "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations."

But let us examine the claims of this peculiar kind of apostolic succession, which, excluding Peter's primacy

and its transmission in but one line, holds the superiority of diocesan bishops over presbyters as an apostolic emanation, and the transmission of it in historical lines when it is old, and the origination of it in some house of bishops or by the authority of an archbishop when it is new. Much as this claim seems to possess of plausibility over the Romish, it is forlorn, comparatively, in the array of its defenders. The service it does to Rome, running with her on one line before the Reformation, is not reciprocated. "You Presbyterians," said Archbishop Magee, "have religion without a Church; they (the papists) have a Church without religion." But Cardinal Bellarmine had anticipated the sarcastic epigram by saying, "Bishops have no part of the true apostolic authority. Apostles could preach and found churches in every part of the world; bishops cannot do this. Apostles could write canonical epistles; bishops cannot do this. Apostles had the gift of tongues and the power of working miracles; this does not belong to bishops. Apostles had jurisdiction over the whole Church; this is not possessed by the bishops. Therefore, bishops can have no part of the true apostolic office." Coinciding for once with Bellarmine, we would argue against the prelatical pretension—

I. The impossibility of identifying in these modern claimants any one, and much more the assemblage, of qualifications specified in Scripture as necessary to the office of apostle. With this absolute want we must connect the end of that great office—to bear witness among all nations of what they had seen and heard in their companionship with Jesus. Power apart from testimony was never exercised by the original twelve unless it was in common with other disciples—evan-

gelists, prophets, elders, deacons, and even "servants and handmaids," who were endued with power from on high at the time of Pentecost. Yet that power was not governmental at all, but demonstrative, as evidence to corroborate the witnessing errand to which the newly-nascent Church of Christianity was universally committed. When Matthias was elected in the place of Judas, the remarkable speech of Peter to the voters explaining the occasion, the necessity and the fitness of the disciple to be chosen by the assembly of "about one hundred and twenty" did not hint in one syllable that upon himself as an apostle rested, in any manner, the responsibility of organizing, directing or superintending the Church or the incipiency of the Church at that time. Every word he uttered bore upon the qualifications and need of another witness, converging at the close in these pregnant words: "Must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection." Yet, strangely enough, the succession of Matthias to Judas, we are now told, is an instance of apostolical succession in the line of paramount authority and government of the Church! Judas had never filled the office of apostle; though nominated with the others and privileged to receive the instruction of our Lord, he fell and went "to his own place" before the appointed season came to be sent forth as a witness. The filling of a vacancy in such circumstances could not be succession to an office. Besides, Matthias had the intransmissible qualifications of other apostles, one of which, at least, Judas did not possess: "Witness with us of his resurrection." And, still more, no modern claimant is chosen by the promiscuous ballot of a whole assembly of disciples, as Matthias was. Official succes-

sion and popular suffrage do not go together in any gradation of hierarchical systems as it was in the choice of a primitive bishop. King James's translators call the position from which the apostate fell "a bishoprick." Acts i. 20. But why did they not call it "deaconship," as the original word signifies in the seventeenth verse, which they translate by the general term "ministry"? Prelacy is not fond, however, of making Judas head of a line. Bishop Gleig says he was a presbyter; Archbishop Potter says he was a deacon; and it must be a polemical strait which would begin the only apparent succession in the Bible with the first of traitors and apostates at the head of a line.

Another fact—indicating, at least, an extension beyond "the twelve," and therefore, it is claimed, an indefinite multiplication of predecessors and lines of apostolical superiors in ruling the Church—is the calling of Paul to apostleship. But why may we not rather suppose that Paul was chosen to fill a vacancy, as Matthias had been, and this vacancy was occasioned by the death of James, the son of Zebedee, who did not live to make "full proof" of his ministry as an apostle? Besides, this great apostle gives us to understand that his calling was exceptional: "Born out of due time, and not meet to be called an apostle," "Less than the least of all saints," etc. The emphasis with which he notices the anomaly of his own vocation surely indicates that the office was not ordinarily extended nor transmitted. Moreover, he also, and even pre-eminently in some respects, possessed the intransmissible qualifications of "the twelve," and it is remarkable that this junior apostle "not meet to be called" one figures the most in church government: "So ordain I, in all the churches."

With him conscious inferiority was a conscious call to govern, organize and dictate pastoral epistles for instruction and guidance of ministers and people. The relative inferiority of governing to preaching is thus indicated with peculiar significance, and consequently "governments" should inherit for ever a subordinate place in apostolic evangelism.

Still another fact urged for the extension of the original band is that Barnabas, with Paul, is called an apostle in Acts xiv. 4, 14, where the denomination is plural—"apostles." This is the only instance of the title given to Barnabas, even by implication, whilst Paul is distinctly called "apostle" seventeen times, and the twelve collectively fifty-four times, in Scripture. This might fairly raise the presumption that Barnabas is so called because of his association with Paul in being sent from Antioch on a special mission, the full record of which is found in Acts xiii., xiv. Indeed, both seem to have been sent from a Presbytery at Antioch by special direction of the Holy Ghost and with the ceremony of ordination, fasting, prayer and the laying on of hands—altogether anomalous in the case of an apostle unless the word be taken in the secondary sense of an ordinary minister, a religious messenger, as it undoubtedly means in 2 Cor. viii. 23. Paul was just as willing to be called "a messenger of Christ" with Barnabas as Peter and John were willing to call themselves "elders." Cave conjectures well that Barnabas had been one of the seventy sent out to herald the ministry of our Lord wherever he purposed to go throughout the country, and therefore possessed the miraculous powers of that age, as well as Paul, which even from that secondary meaning of "apostle" could not be transmitted to suc-

ceeding generations. Take all the persons called by this name in any one of its three senses, technical, official or appellative—take Timothy, Silas, Epaphroditus, Andronicus and Junia, as well as the certain brethren who accompanied Titus to Corinth—and say they were all apostles in the highest sense of the great office, and they can have no successors now in the "signs of an apostle," "wonders and mighty deeds," to attest the dignity of such inheritance.

We are met again by the same begging of the question in regard to the true sense of the word "apostle" where the application of it is doubtful at all. Thus, in 1 Thessalonians, at the beginning, we read, "Paul and Silvanus and Timotheus, unto the church of the Thessalonians," and then, reading on to the sixth verse of the second chapter, we read there, "Nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor yet of others, when we might have been burdensome, as the apostles of Christ." Here, it is alleged, is a manifest application of the name "apostles" to Silas and Timothy, as well as to Paul himself. But is everything said in the body of an epistle to be applied alike to each one mentioned in the form of salutation, either at the beginning or at the end of a letter? And even here, on such assumption, we must include with Paul both Silas and Timothy in the maltreatment of Paul at Philippi (Acts xvi. 22), which was not a fact in the case of Timothy. The use of "we" interchangeably with "I" is familiar in the diction of Paul, as we see in this very connection (1 Thess. ii. 18): "Wherefore, we would have come unto you, even I Paul, once and again; but Satan hindered us." And then, passing on to the third chapter, first verse, he says, "When *we* could no longer forbear," and, verse 5,

"When *I* could no longer forbear," in reference to the very same thing. It should be noticed also here that the particle "as" itself makes the application of the term "apostles" to Silas and Timothy doubtful in the sense, and the expression may mean, "We might have been burdensome as the apostles of Christ" *have a right to be*, thus reducing it again to the secondary sense of ministers or messengers of Christ in general.

Another instance of doubtful application is in Rom. xvi. 7, where Andronicus and Junia are said to be "of note among the apostles"—that is, in grammatical construction either they were quite renowned as apostles or they were held in high esteem among the apostles for their zeal, intelligence and liberal hospitality; and biblical history demands the latter construction, beyond a doubt. Thus we see how vain, and even frivolous, must be the play upon words—names which have a double, and even triple, sense often in Scripture—to widen a basis for the derivation of apostolical virtue to the succession of the highest in three orders of the ministry as maintained in the gradations of modern prelacy. The pretension which would extend the original number of apostles in order to make it descend with apostolical succession excludes this one Greek name of office from the principles of interpretation and common sense which apply to all other names of office—deacon, elder, etc. It makes every messenger like Epaphroditus equal to Paul in dignity, and every deacon equal to him in the ministry, and every old man a presbyter equal to John and Peter.

II. The original and only band of apostles that ever existed, or can exist, in the Church of Christ appear always in Scripture history as a distinct body of men,

unique, well defined and strongly marked, making on the mind of an unsophisticated reader the conviction that they were a temporary institution. In sacred history they are like a constituent assembly, or convention of the people to form a constitution or to recognize a good constitution, in whole or in part, already formed, and then give place to representatives of the people in legislative, judicial and executive power to carry on the government they have sanctioned. Who does not think of the apostles as a temporary order already off the stage or just departing when he reads the seventeenth and eighteenth verses of Jude: "But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; how that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts"? or that sublime apostrophe in Rev. xviii. 20: "Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets, for God hath avenged you on her"? (See also Rev. xxi. 14, where we have "the twelve apostles of the Lamb" inscribed on twelve foundations in the heavenly Jerusalem.) There is in such passages a style of definite allusion which manifestly precludes the indefinite extension and succession of the apostolic office, and it is absurd to suppose that the primitive Church would have been so indifferent to such a succession as to take elders universally for governors and compel the old Jewish hierarchy to creep back again by degrees after centuries of suppression, during which, according to Irenæus and many others, the succession was carried on through elders.

It will not avail the advocates of apostolical succession in prelacy to cite 2 Cor. xi. 13 and Rev. ii. 2

against the palpable facts of history. The former quotation is, "For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ," and the latter thus: "Thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars." How could there be pretenders, it is asked, if no genuine apostolic successors were in existence? This argument is another begging of the question in regard to the meaning of the word "apostle," affirming of the thing that is to be proved that it is to be taken only in the first of three distinct senses in which it is used by Holy Writ. We affirm with exegetical justice that there were in the field just then genuine apostles abundantly as the word is found in 2 Cor. viii. 23: "Or our brethren be enquired of, they are the messengers [apostles] of the churches, and the glory of Christ." All our parochial bishops, all our missionary ministers, all our teaching elders, are apostles in the sense of Christian "messengers" according to the translation made at first, and recently made again, by Protestant Episcopalian scholars.

But, even yielding to the beggarly argument this point, we may well say that the existence of false apostles, in any sense of the word, does not imply necessarily the existence of true apostles in the same sense *at the same time:* it implies no more than that the true existed at some time. Fanatics have appeared in every age pretending to visions and revelations, and even to gift of tongues and working of miracles, and claiming a commission to go forth as religious ambassadors to all nations. We may call such "false apostles" now without meaning at all that the original "twelve" are now in the field on their lineal descent

among the dignitaries of Christendom. The apostle John was then living, and these false apostles might have been counterfeit elders pretending to be messengers (apostles) sent by him, or they may have been adversaries to John, like "Diotrephes, who loveth to have the pre-eminence among them," and would not receive messages from the venerable exile in Patmos. 3 John 9. "To have the pre-eminence among them" was always illicit, alien and reprehensible under the mastery of Jesus himself and under all his true disciples who should afterward encounter this baleful ambition through the ages.

"The pre-eminence" we combat now has still another *petitio principii* with which it would blur the finish of the apostolical order in the original twelve. The angels of the seven churches (Rev. ii., iii.), it is claimed, must have been diocesan bishops of the respective churches, presiding over and representing these to God and men. This bald assertion has no plausibility whatever to commend it. Like *ἀπόστολος*, the word *ἄγγελος* ("angel") has three distinct senses in Scripture, the highest meaning a spiritual order of beings above mankind, and in a special way applied to Christ himself; an intermediate sense of religious messengers, applied by our Lord to John the Baptist; and the common appellative sense of messengers merely—occurring most frequently, and often in miscellaneous agencies, good and bad, material and immaterial—to execute the purposes and the judgments of God. As there was in the old ecclesia continued by Christ and his apostles in their ministry an angel of the synagogue delegated by foreign synagogues to represent them at Jerusalem, so it was natural, if not inevitable, that the name and the office would pass on to the Chris-

tian Church of the future; and the fact of its use in this connection is another beautiful indication of the perpetuity with which our divine Head connects one dispensation with another by a living institute as well as by an inspired book. Whatever may be the precise meaning of the metaphor, it is certainly not ruling over the Church, but some function of missionary evangelism in teaching and preaching; for in the fourteenth chapter and sixth verse of Revelation we read, "I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation and kindred and tongue and people." Scripture is the best interpreter of Scripture; and the seven angels must be, therefore, seven preachers, and not seven prelates. They were simply pastors or parochial bishops, presbyters, with oversight of their respective pastoral charges, in which sense alone they were Episcopalians. Or we may take each of those angels in the collective sense and consider it personated in the clerk of a Presbytery of greater or less proportion, to whom letters and messages would be sent for the body he served. Or we may go down to the simple adjective sense of the word, and with Dr. Killen suppose they were messengers merely of the seven churches respectively, who were sent to the apostle John with presents for his necessities in the rocky and sterile island of Patmos, and received in return the messages of revelation for the churches they severally represented. Or we may ascend to the highest conceivable sense of the word as a name for any creature, and may suppose, with Dr. J. Addison Alexander, that, inasmuch as the Apocalypse resembles the prophecies of Daniel so much, the term here may mean the guardian angel of each church or

community of churches addressed in the visions of John.* Any one of these interpretations is colored with fair probability compared with the utterly unsupported assertion of prelacy that the angels must have been diocesan bishops.

Bishop McIlvaine exulted in what he considered a demonstration of this when he quotes Ignatius, of the second century, who had conversed with John the apostle, and who some twelve years after the Apocalypse was written said in a letter to the church of Ephesus that Onesimus was their bishop. Now, inasmuch as the church of Ephesus undoubtedly had a plurality of elders, as we see in Acts xx., where Paul sent for them to meet him at Miletus, and inasmuch as the collective term "church" is used by Ignatius, the person denominated "angel" in the Revelation must have had a superintending dignity at Ephesus such as Paul had exercised over those elders, and therefore the said Onesimus had in him the apostolical succession. But this argument takes for granted, again, the very thing to be proved—that "bishop" and "angel" are identical, and that the plurality of elders mentioned in Acts xx. were teaching, and not ruling, elders, and that, if teaching elders, they were all from the city of Ephesus, and not from the adjacent region also round about it, and if all from one city and centre that the plurality had not been reduced to a single pastor in the time of that Onesimus. The tangle of these previous questions puzzled Bishop Onderdonk himself, who, though less renowned for piety than his brother in Ohio, was quite his equal in acuteness. Both these erudite and able men admitted

* This interpretation of "angel" seems to be preferred by Dr. Lightfoot, bishop of Durham, in his book on Philippians, p. 200.

that "bishop" and "presbyter" were the same in Holy Scripture and used convertibly there, and the difficulty which exercised both on the subject of these angels in Revelation was why the superintending authority in the Church should be called "angel" here, and not "apostle" or "bishop." Bishop Onderdonk solves it in this way: "The name 'bishop' was *in transitu* just then from the second order to the first; the former title of 'apostle' was losing, or beginning to lose, its more general application, and the latter, 'bishop,' had not yet acquired its final appropriation." "The dignitaries in question were addressed when it was somewhat *too late* to call them *apostles* and somewhat *too soon* to call them *bishops*." Such a dodge of mere assertion may be left to answer itself as a specimen of logic in support of apostolic succession according to prelacy.

Along with the "demonstration" of Bishop McIlvaine and the clearing of its difficulty by Bishop Onderdonk we may range an incident in Presbyterian history. At the General Assembly met in Pittsburg in 1849 a commissioner from the Presbytery of New York, Dr. Phillips, handed to the clerk, at the opening, his certificate in the usual form, stating that he was "bishop of the First Presbyterian Church, New York." In the memory of several members of that Assembly the same First Church had early in the century three parochial bishops in a collegiate arrangement, officiating in three different places of the same organization. These facts going down historically with the name "bishop" in our standard prescribed in the formula of commission, and our Protestant Episcopalian brethren, admitting no one to be called "bishop" any more in the true scriptural use of the title, might exclaim, half a cen-

tury hence, that Dr. Phillips must have been a veritable diocesan having a considerable portion of New York for his oversight and other ministers for his suffragans. The same kind of process which in New York set off from time to time the Brick Church and the Rutgers Street Church into separate organizations, and one pastor for each, may have reduced the plurality of presbyters in the time of Paul distributed through Ephesus and its vicinity to one pastor in the city itself, called by Ignatius "Onesimus," accepting the statement as genuine and as no part of the pseudo-Ignatian literature which is so abundant.

Historical Failure of Apostolic Rank in Prelacy.

III. Other primitive offices of great importance in the Church are confessedly discontinued—the office of prophet, for example, and that of evangelist as the latter was exercised in the apostolical age. When the prophecies of the Old Testament had been expounded with sufficient clearness to the primitive Christians and all the predictions needed to sustain and comfort the New-Testament church had been uttered and recorded, and when the foundations of the Church had been laid and confirmed by apostolic aids and legates, the prophets and evangelists of the Pentecostal period were withdrawn as having finished their work. And why should not the apostolic office itself, which in its nature, end and the exigencies that brought it on the stage was the most extraordinary and transient of all, be considered as past altogether when its testimony had been given to the accessible nations and its constructive skill and authority had linked the ecclesia of the New to the Old Testa-

ment dispensation by the ordination of "elders in every church," transmuting to a Christian character the Hebrew synagogue, oratory and school of the prophets? The Church needed no express declaration of God that this office had ceased when this work was done. No such declaration was needed to convince the children of Israel that the office of Moses and Joshua ceased when they were ultimately settled in Canaan, or that the Urim and the Thummim ceased to direct them when responses were no longer obtained from the breastplate of Aaron. No revelation was needed by the primitive Fathers that the office of prophet ceased when the apocalyptic visions of John were authenticated, nor that the inspiration of the Holy Ghost had ceased to indite canonical scriptures when the fact of a heavenly afflatus could be recognized no longer. And why should any one demand an express declaration that the office of apostle ceased when ministers no longer saw the person of Jesus with bodily eye, or received their commission immediately from him, or performed mighty deeds to the senses of men, or swayed paramount authority wherever they carried the gospel?

IV. Early history presents a chasm over which apostolical succession cannot pass. The term "apostle" had manifestly ceased to be used in its highest official sense when the enraptured hearers of Chrysostom exclaimed, "Thou art the thirteenth apostle!" This one incident, among a thousand more which might be cited, shows incisively that the ancient Church had no thought of apostolical succession beyond the lives of the original "twelve," and the enlargement or continuance by a single unit was only the extravagance of Oriental hyperbole. "Many," says Eusebius, "were called 'apostles' by

way of imitation," which would not have been the case if the office itself had been transmitted. Men were not called "presbyters" by way of imitation. Ambrose of Milan, speaking of the most eminent and revered ministers of his day—although it was a time of much clerical ambition and affectation and though he himself was fond of titles, having been a civil ruler—says, "They thought it not decent to assume to themselves the name of 'apostles,' but, dividing the names, they left to presbyters the name of 'presbytery,' and they themselves were called 'bishops.'" A pretension which imperial Christianity itself repudiated is certainly incongruous in this age and this country.

But along with these intimations that it was indecent even then for the highest dignities to affect apostolic name or derivation were many positive declarations that presbyters succeeded to all the vacancies left by the extraordinary witnesses "whom He named apostles." Ignatius himself said, "Presbyters preside in the place of the council of apostles;" "Let all reverence the presbyters as the Sanhedrim of God, and as the college of apostles;" "See that ye follow presbyters as apostles." At the same time, and later in the centuries, it became customary to call "apostle" any prominent and extraordinary friend of the Church not in her ministry at all. Thus, Constantine the Great and his empress Helen are called *ἀπόστολοι* by the writers of the fourth and fifth centuries, and so were eminent women who distinguished their fidelity to Christ in times of persecution and missionary hazard. Augustine and Jerome both speak of four kinds of apostles. In the first rank Jerome puts Moses and the prophets, Paul and the other apostles; in the second rank he puts

Joshua the son of Nun; in the third rank, any officers of the Church regularly chosen and ordained according to the appointment of God; and in the fourth rank such as come into the ministry of their own will without either internal or external call, imposing on the people.

Thus we might easily gather from all patristic literature, beginning with the Clements of Rome and Alexandria and through the Augustan age to Theodoret of the fifth century, that the apostolic ministry was emphatically the presbyters, who, when made overseers of a particular flock, were called "bishops;" and even in them it was by accommodation of the word "apostle," which after the twelve departed everywhere descended to its appellative significance of "*one sent*," and, especially in the ecclesia, "a religious messenger sent." This remarkable disuse of the proper name "apostle" is conclusive against the claim of modern apostle-bishops to inherit the rank of primitive disciples chosen by our Lord to bear this name, because it was not the character of ancient Christianity so to intermit or abate the names which had been consecrated by the lips of our Saviour. He "called unto him his disciples, and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles." Luke vi. 13. No wonder that even in the fourth century aspirants to dignity and superiority in the Church "thought it not decent to assume to themselves the name of 'apostles;'" the wonder now is that so many good men of this generation covet the style with fond complacency and eager asseveration.

V. The local fixedness of a bishop precludes the propriety of prefixing the name of "apostle" or "apostolic" to such a term. "Diocesan" is a better adjective,

to distinguish it from the "bishop" of the Bible, that is parochial and convertible with "presbyter" beyond a question. Besides the unaccountable change of name is the marvel of a great transmutation from travelling over all countries, for the testimony of Jesus to a permanent abode in one place must be explained by the assumption of apostolic virtue in the diocesan. On the true theory that the apostles were an extraordinary and transient order commissioned to bear witness for Christ and provide for the infant Church a ministry, to continue their testimony in localities of fixed abode, composed of presbyters or bishops, according to their actual investment or not with pastoral oversight, all is natural and intelligible in the narrative of sacred institutions; but on the hypothesis of a transmitted apostolate the sudden identification of this high and itinerant order with the local officers which sprung from their hands in ordaining them on the vote of any particular church, and that without a hint of such condescension in Scripture, must be for ever inexplicable. "As well might we call the king 'mayor of London' and the bishop of London 'vicar of Pancras' as to say that an apostle was bishop of some particular charge committed to his care." These words are quoted from an old English bishop who denied the claim of prelacy to any peculiar apostolicity.

The fable, under the name of an old tradition, to which Bishop Gleig and others resort for an explanation is that the apostles, after the ascension of our Lord, divided among themselves the territories of the inhabited world. James had Judea, Paul had Syria, Peter had Italy, John had Asia Minor, Andrew had Scythia, Thomas had India, and so every one of the original

apostles had his own diocese. The Bible itself is brought to bolster the story (2 Cor. x. 13): "But we will not boast of things without our measure; but according to the measure of the rule, which God hath distributed to us, a measure to reach even to you." The measure mentioned here, it is said, means the boundary of Paul's diocese. If so, however, it spoils the beauty of the alleged division, for in the sixteenth verse it seems clear that Paul's measure, geographically, would be pushed to Corinth and the regions beyond, and it actually was pushed to the centre of Italy, and perhaps the utmost boundary of the West, making him, according to the legend, the most erratic and unscrupulous intruder that was ever called by a prelatical name. Happily, we can refer to Episcopalians themselves for a better interpretation—that the "measure" is moral, and not physical; agonistic, and not geographical. Dr. Hammond says, "The allusion is to the Isthmian games, where each racer ran within two white lines which he might not transgress either right or left, so that there would be no jostle of each other in the course." Such lines were the apostle's measure, which God had distributed, not man, nor apostles among themselves, though doubtless they were agreed to respect one another's calling—one to "the circumcision," as Peter, James and John to the Jews; another to "the uncircumcision," as Paul—so that no one would interfere with another and build on his labors in traversing the globe. The measure of each apostle, then, would allow him the ends of the earth for his goal, provided he would not intrude into another man's work or speed on his own with rival ambition.

The only historical basis on which the fiction of a

territorial division among the apostles can rest is a fragment of Hegesippus quoted by Eusebius, which says, that "James received the government of the Church along with the apostles." The acknowledged inaccuracy of this fragment in other particulars must abate or destroy its creed; yet on its face, with full credit, there is no evidence that diocesan episcopacy was adopted three hundred years before its time in history. The fact that James appeared to be residing at Jerusalem when the council of apostles and elders met there (Acts xv.) is of no force for such a claim; it only proves that he was there before others arrived. And many learned men among the ancients—Gregory of Nyssen, Clement, author of the *Recognitions*, Dorotheus and Michael Glycas—with Eusebius himself, believed that James, whom tradition makes the first bishop of Jerusalem, was one of the seventy whom our Lord had sent before him as he proceeded through the land of Judæa. But, even admitting that James the Apostle was first bishop of Jerusalem, it does not prove that the sublime and ubiquitous commissioners whom the ascending Head sent forth to all the world settled down everywhere in dioceses to bear witness for him in corners, respectively, as soon as they could agree upon the boundaries.

VI. Presbyters succeed the apostles in their work, all that can be done in the service of the gospel, since these extraordinary witnesses finished their testimony. The great work to be done lies, of course, on the face of the great commission to teach and baptize. Formalities of investiture, such as ordination, cannot be of equal importance, and must be at the best only means to this end, inferior in value and significance wherever it is held that man does not confer the ministry. What,

then, are the reserved powers of apostolic dignity which descend to men of a higher order than presbyters? Separated from the word and sacraments, what do they inherit? A ceremony at most which has never been fairly defined, and which its advocates cannot agree in defining. And even could they agree and be able to demonstrate the ceremony to be superlative in value, what are the qualifications of the rank so empowered—the apostle-bishop distinguished from the presbyter-bishop? To the primitive qualifications of apostle they cannot pretend; to the scriptural qualifications of a bishop they must give up a perfect equality with elders, as the Bible directs, most obviously; yet with strange inconsistency they are compelled to read the qualifications of an elder as those of the diocesan bishop. No distinctive qualifications for such an office can be found in Holy Writ, and of course no scriptural warrant for the office. All that is divinely specified for the work of the ministry and its indispensable endowment being manifestly found in another channel descending, is it not fair to conclude that this one is empty, man-made and presumptuous?

VII. It is impossible to make out a line of succession through such apostle-bishops as a matter of historical deduction. Antecedent embarrassment in bridging the interval between them and original apostles, for want of the name, the work and the qualifications of apostle, must be added to all the difficulties already specified in the Romish succession if that be the line preferred, as it is by the Tractarians of Oxford, and added to still greater difficulties if it be preferred, as it seems to be, by American prelates—some of them, at least—to trace their succession in England itself back to

the apostle Paul. That Paul or any other apostle came to Great Britain has no historical foundation except the statement of Clemens Romanus that Paul traveled "to the utmost bounds of the West," which Theodoret three hundred years afterward made out to mean Britain. This is the first link, and rather too long a suspense of history intervening to be plausible. But, granting that it was credibly ascertained, we find no continuous record to confirm the fact or to invite our faith in any succession to him; for every line was broken by the Diocletian persecution, which followed—burning the books, demolishing the temples and slaughtering every priest and every bishop in the province. And if any fragments of the chain escaped that fury, they must have been buried from the sight of Christendom when the Saxons came over and restored the reign of pagan idolatry for a hundred and fifty years. Rome replaced Christianity in England, but not without many a dubious fact in the course of ministerial succession. There was an ancient stream from North Britain which gives trouble to mitred antiquarians—a stream of presbyterian ordinations from the Culdees of Iona—which the Venerable Bede confesses, and which became the fountain of ecclesiastical power to many a prelate of England; and then, through generations after, there was many an oversight or mistake in subsequent ordinations which, according to late learned exactness in the credentials of pedigree, must baffle the heraldry of modern apostles. Archbishop Parker, in the reign of Elizabeth, was consecrated by four bishops who had been deposed in the reign of Bloody Mary and never restored, and for a while presbyters from Geneva and other parts of Continental Europe, like Morrison, were admitted to full

orders without reordination. And within the realm itself some of the most illustrious bishops and archbishops of the Anglican Church—Burnet, Butler, Secker and Tillotson—especially from Presbyterian and other dissenting homes, came into the Establishment without feeling the attraction of apostolic virtue there more than Cranmer did, or seeking confirmation to cure the defects of Puritan baptism—if, indeed, they had been baptized at all, for one of them, at least, is said to have been the son of an Anabaptist father, and probably was never baptized. Conformity has hardly ever failed to carry with it some anomaly into the so-called apostolic channel—either an excess in the form of intemperate zeal, which certainly did not characterize a genuine apostle, or an earnest *nolo episcopari*, which also never was known to be reluctant among the disciples whom Jesus "named apostles;" for, like Paul, the true-hearted would instantly accept and "magnify" the office, and exclaim, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" Bishop Burnet refused the offer of a bishopric in Scotland because the diocesans there would not be parochial enough in the cure of souls nor live as proper examples to the flock; and when, at length, promoted to the see of Salisbury, he distinguished his ministry as eminently parochial in the diligence and minuteness of his visitation and the incessancy of his personal preaching and private exhortation. *The Pastoral Care*, from his pen, as well as the practice of his life, evinces that any consciousness in him of apostolic tradition was in the parish pastor, etc., and the diocesan superiority came only from the State. So with Bishop Butler, whose *Analogy* distinguished him so greatly in the world of thought. When King George II. appointed him to the deanery of St. Paul's, Lon-

don, he declined the dignity, preferring to remain in his parish at Stanhope; and when he was translated afterward to the see of Durham, he accepted it as the gift of civil authority, not dreaming that it came to him in regular descent from the apostle Paul. Archbishop Secker, without seeking or assuming anything more than the office of parochial bishop, was made by civil authority bishop of Bristol and of London, and then primate of all England, and had the rare privilege of anointing two heads of the Anglican Church in succession—George II. and George III.—having received that primacy from the duke of Newcastle, who was at the head of the cabinet in the government of the kingdom. Prior to Secker the accomplished Tillotson was archbishop of Canterbury, and is said to have done what he could to avoid the honor, accepting it with unfeigned reluctance at the bidding of a secular magistracy, and that, probably, to reward him for the only blot on his character—a vain attempt to extort from Lord Russell, on the scaffold, a declaration in favor of passive obedience to monarchy. Certainly, these great and good prelates never imagined apostolic virtues to stream on the sublimer currents of clerical promotion, or any other current of succession, than what Peter signified when he wrote, "The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ: feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock." 1 Pet. v.

American prelacy, being without any shade of theocratical establishment or mixture of Church and State making turbid or dubious the channel of descent, is

obliged to make the most of apostolical significance in its vacuity and claims; but the derivation is remarkably peculiar. Bishop Seabury was ordained the first American prelate in 1784, but it was in Scotland, among the "non-juror" ecclesiastics and where there is presumption of history that prelacy had its origin in presbytery, and as a stream it could rise no higher than the fountain. Besides, Burnet, though born and reared in Edinburgh, declined a bishopric there on other and worse grounds. Consequently, doubts respecting the sufficiency of Seabury's consecration widely prevailed, although he went on to ordain and his ordinations were considered valid. The next three bishops, however, went to England together, for consecration — White, Madison and Prevoost—but there the prelates of the realm, strangely unconscious of apostolic prerogative in themselves, would do nothing of the kind without consent of the king and his legislature. Accordingly, it is said, an act of Parliament was procured allowing ordinations for the United States by warrant from His Majesty, and with a proviso that no bishop so consecrated, and no priest or deacon ordained by him, should be allowed to exercise their functions within His Majesty's dominions. However much that legislation be now regarded as a dead letter, it is a formal tie which binds American prelacy to the succession of the past, and a solecism in the charter derived from our supreme and eternal Head, which is catholic without limitation and includes the twelve, the elders and the people together in that sublime behest, "All power is given unto me, in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach *all* nations."

The entire withdrawal of State support and polity

from ecclesiastical constitutions in this country seems also to have doubled the stress with which prelacy leans on formulas of heredity and minute exactness of words and signs. When Bishops Hobart and Griswold were consecrated, in the early part of this century, it appears that certain words were omitted in the performance of the ceremonies, which gave rise to much animated and anxious debate and to considerable fear for the legitimacy of succession. A contemporaneous pamphleteer thus published the disturbance of his faith: "Suppose, then, at some future period, when the heat of passion is allayed, when calm reflection is suffered to be called into exercise, that then it shall be found and acknowledged that the considerations here advanced have weight, and that the consecration is attended with an essential defect; what shall then be the state of our Church? Our priesthood invalid, our succession lost; numbers, under a show of ordination, ministering without authority, and the evil so extended as to be beyond the power of correction. . . . I am seriously and conscientiously persuaded that the omission of the solemn words is material, that it is essential, that it renders the whole form, besides, an utter nullity." Such are the incertitude and the hazard of diocesan succession beneath the light of modern observation.

And what must it have been through fifteen hundred years preceding, when the highest dignities of this kind in England were sold at times to the highest bidder, bestowed in popular tumult, or given by a profligate woman to her paramour or by a feudal baron to his kinsman? In the time of Alfred there was hardly a priest to be found south of the Thames who could read Latin or English; and boys ten or twelve years old were

invested with the ring and crosier, and the striplings, drunk or sober, would impart episcopal virtue to others of their own age or older. So it was—better and worse by turns—till the time of King Henry VIII., that cruel and licentious monarch who rudely arrested the old succession and made himself henceforth the fountain of ecclesiastical ordinations.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE TRUE DOCTRINE OF SUCCESSION IN THE MINISTRY.

WHEN Luther supposed, in his constructive hypothesis, a company of church-members cast upon a desert island without a regular ministry to break the bread of life and dispense the ordinances of Christian worship, and without the prospect or the possibility of obtaining one, he asserted the competency of that forlorn community to choose one of their own number best qualified, in their judgment, for the sacred office, and to set him apart with any form of becoming solemnity. That ordination, he insisted, would be valid as much as if it were conferred by all the bishops in the world. This reveals to us a logical fairness in the mind of that great Reformer respecting the last commission of our Lord—that it was bestowed upon the whole Church, including the people, of course, as well as the eleven whom he charged as representatives. But this dotted line of Luther has been rubbed out by later theologians, not all of them prelatical, who seem to stickle for points of order more than for the substance or the proceeding itself, and he is charged by Dr. Samuel Hopkins with "begging the question" because the promise of our ascending Master to be with us alway, even to the end of the world, is so positive and potent in securing its

own fulfilment that such a case could never occur in the providence of God.

Yet is there not much more a begging of the question in such presumption upon that precious promise, making it the bolster of a ceremony? Think of our need of having Jesus with us in the perils and toils and contradiction of sinners against us, the weakness and weariness, the reverses and despondency, the wants, the necessities, the distresses, the hopes, the adventures, the results—in short, everything—in the actual experience of ministers which the presence of Christ by his Spirit will succor and uphold rather than a mere ceremony of succession which at the most is only means to an end. A joint is important and useful, and ordinarily indispensable, but it occupies little or no space in the body. The juncture of one generation with another in office to continue the order is precisely similar in relative value. It designates only transition; and when made more than this, order is but obstacle. Surely, it is the arm, and not the elbow, that we stretch out in fighting the good fight of faith. It is the car itself, and not the coupler, which in the free course of the gospel carries that trained *personnel* who go to gird the world with light and love. It is the great work of saving souls and building up God's people in their most holy faith which engages the perpetual presence of Jesus, with but little ceremony, and less of pedigree, when we are prepared and recognized at the entrance as called of God.

The significant silence of our Lord himself on the method of succession when he meant this to be perpetual in the "alway" of his promise, not even hinting whether it should be visible or invisible, or neither, invariably—whether its line should be continued at the

top or at the bottom of his building by the Spirit, the bishops or the people of his fold, or by both together in action—should make us modest as we are loyal in dogmatizing at this impalpable point. Probably the ascending Jesus, like his succeeding disciples through subsequent time, who are apt to recall the usages of youth in religion and think how choice they were, though homely, when about to leave this world, thought of the synagogue at Nazareth where he was accustomed to worship with his parents, and other synagogues where he began and continued his own ministry on earth, as a model good enough for all time, with its freedom of franchise for the people, its deference to rulers, invitation to qualified teachers and preachers and readers of Scripture, its resiliency to the past and suitableness to the present and accommodation to the future of that one Church for which he suffered and died and would ever intercede. We dare to affirm that such characteristics as these, by whatever name we call the institute, are the interpretation of his silence on the subject of succession.

Almost equally silent were the apostles of Christ on the subject of ordination. Their example was also reserved; and when they did either speak or act in the exercise of authority reposed in them, it was to reproduce the synagogue in its norm of organization by the appointment of elders, making their succession to hinge on personal faithfulness and ability in the future, just as in the past, of the ecclesia. There is no record of one apostle officiating in ordination. The passage in 2 Tim. i. 6 ("Wherefore, I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God which is in thee, by the putting on of my hands") does not refer to ordination, but to the Pentecostal charism of extraordinary faith, such as

characterized the apostolic age, as we see in the context. His grandmother and his mother, and Timothy himself, shared such a gift, and it was usually bestowed by a lone apostle laying on his hands. Acts xix. 6. But Timothy was "ordained with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery," as we shall notice again.

It was only the return of sacerdotal mediation which began to make the mere ligature of succession a distinct and prominent thing in the attention of the Christian Church. It was when the names of priest, altar, sacrifice, incense, vestments, processions, etc.—all the vocabulary of the old temple-service—became the affectation of degenerate Christianity after the destruction of the Jewish State by Hadrian in the second century that the tie of one generation to another in office became signal and that genealogies became ethical and weighty, more than doctrines themselves. The whole tribe of Levi, as it were, seemed reinstated in the Church. Persons more than qualifications were considered, places more than missions, dignities more than ministries and ordination itself more than order, and soon transmuted to a sacrament of more intrinsic mystery than even baptism and the Lord's Supper. The two distinct lines of service in the old economy which Messiah came both to unify and to simplify were unified now by way of amalgam with all simplicity left out and much of Judaism and something of paganism put in. And so the lump descended until the great Reformation. Wherever this revival could be developed fairly, without obstruction from the State, the following has been evinced as the consensus of Protestant Christianity on the subject of succession in the ministry.

I. It is a measure of order which is relative, and not

absolute, in the necessity. Order is always frangible in proportion as it is high-strung, and order for the sake of order is self-destructive. It is the beautiful symmetry and strength of our faith to have truth as the foundation and consistency as the plumb-line of all structure, and of duration too. When the apostle Paul discloses to the evangelist Timothy all that is couched in the mystery of ordination and succession, it is in these words (2 Tim. ii. 2): "And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also." He does not say "able to ordain others also," as he would have said if the grace of orders were a mystery to be handed on from one man to another, or the succession it effected were apostolical in its level or its height or grade of any kind. It is not the function, but the doctrine; not the ruler, but the teacher; not the circumstance of appointment, but the ability which conditions and deserves it,—that the apostle manifestly indicates for the guidance of the Church in every age. Observe, on the face of this important passage, how faithfulness and ability are made so essential and paramount that we must understand them to be sufficient in themselves, with any kind of conventional agreement in the Church, for ever to constitute a valid transmission of her ministry.

The injunction "Commit thou" expresses in the original the idea of trust confided, and this idea will associate in its notion wisdom, integrity, care, diligence, responsibility,—all to be considered in the recipient of a trust, whilst the regular form of handing it over is comparatively of little importance. It should be noticed, also, that in a parallel place (1 Tim. vi. 20) the matter of trust is in the singular number: "O Timothy, keep

that which is committed to thy trust." Here it is plural: "The things that thou hast heard of me," etc. The kind of trust in both places must be the same—the gospel of the grace of God, the great facts in the life, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus, the rule of faith and life in the Scriptures, the whole "mystery of godliness" and the conversion of souls. These had now become a multiplied information abundantly authenticated to the knowledge and experience of Timothy, when he is instructed to ordain others in the way of entrusting them to faithful and capable men. It is by no means a gratuitous comment on this comparison to say that ordination itself makes progress with the progress of the gospel and the education of its ministry, that succession is an open secret and one of enlargement in its openness, that the increasing evidences of Christianity, "many witnesses," its widespreading triumph of missionary enterprise and indirect benefaction to all human interests, and its ever-expanding field for the novitiates, devolve on successors to us now more "things" which are "most surely believed," more widely established, more abundantly furnished, than all the charges our own consecration contained. No sacrament in ordination could make progress in this way. No one thing of earth could so multiply and develop itself in one generation. No Timothy could be found to say that the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery now cannot purport more "things" of significance than were included in the charge at his own ordination. The formula of induction, of course, should remain without alteration, for the sake of regularity; but assuredly the purport of such solemnity grows apace and in manifestation; the plural is multiplied, and succession must go on to thrive without

monopoly, and travel now to the end of the world without a ribbon on its trumpet or a vestment for its badge. There is no secreted virtue hid in succession. On the other hand, no lineage of succession whose ordination is titular only can have a valid claim to preach, baptize and ordain, however derived and perfectly rubrical in its legitimacy, without faithfulness and ability in the subject. Induction is a wicked presumption without supreme relation to these qualifications. And this relative measure of order is conceded by Palmer of Oxford in his exhaustive apology for the Church of England when he says in substance that no regularity of transmission which originates in heresy or schism can make a valid ministry. What vitiates a line at the beginning would spoil it also at the middle and anywhere along its course where entrance is made. No matter how true and how regular may be the beginning of a line, the lapse of its descent into heresy or into schism will invalidate the transmission and make succession void for want of faithfulness and ability in continuance; so that there is no point of view at which these factors in ordination are not seen to be an absolute need, and that initial performance they justify as no more than a relative and secondary enactment. We must imagine the *opus operatum* of a sacrament in orders to make the form an absolute necessity—the technical firmer than the moral, the nominal and artificial supreme in its obligation after substance and life have departed.

II. This relative need of order in succession is fulfilled in that of presbyters, especially when charged as bishops having the oversight of particular flocks respectively. It is now universally conceded by the candid and intelligent churchmen of this age that

Jerome of the fourth century was right in contending, that the Bible uses "bishop" and "presbyter" in the same sense convertibly and continually, with this as the only shade of difference—that "presbyter" is called "bishop" when charged with the oversight of a particular church. All the early Fathers, from the time of the apostles to the First General Council, at Nice, A. D. 325, may be fairly construed as holding the same opinion. Toward the end of this period the parochial bishops began to claim superiority of rank over one another according to the importance of the particular churches they tended, especially the city churches over the country churches. But this was not in extent of jurisdiction until Church and State united and Constantine began to measure off the bishoprics to correspond with minor provinces of his empire. Then came into ecclesiastical parlance the word "diocese"—a term of merely civil and secular origin, expressing in its Greek etymon a territorial district parcelled out with special view to the financial economy in government. Of course, like other words, it could be Christianized as it became convenient, but such adoption could never make it "apostolical" and "divine" without some sanction from inspiration of the Holy Ghost, such as Jesus breathed on his apostles.

Irenæus, bishop of Lyons and Vienne A. D. 177–202, born in Asia Minor, acquainted with Polycarp in his youth and regarded as the best pacificator of his age between the East and the West, in his celebrated work against heresies refers again and again to the true apostolical ministry as descending in the line of presbyters, elders—whom he denominates "bishops" interchangeably—as the true integers of succession from the apos-

tles. In book iii. chap. 2 he says of heretics: "When we refer them to that tradition which originates from the apostles, and which is preserved by means of the successions of presbyters in the churches, they object to tradition, saying that they themselves are wiser than the apostles because they have discovered the unadulterated truth." Then, hardly a page farther on, in the same book (chap. 3), we read these remarkable and memorable words, synoptical of all patristic literature on the subject of succession, showing that it is simple history in its nature, without mystery or any hidden virtue descending: "It is in the power of all, therefore, who may wish to see the truth to contemplate clearly the tradition of the apostles manifested throughout the whole world, and we are in a position to reckon up those who were by the apostles instituted bishops in the churches and the successions of these men to our own times—those who neither taught nor knew of anything like what these rave about. For if the apostles had known hidden mysteries which they were in the habit of imparting to the perfect, . . . they would have delivered them, especially to those to whom they were also committing the churches themselves. For they were desirous that these men should be very perfect and blameless in all things, whom also they were leaving behind as their successors, delivering up their own place of government to these men; which men, if they discharged their functions honestly, would be a great boon; but if they should fall away, the direst calamity."

III. The actual tradition of the ministry since the day of the apostles, according to history which is authentic, will furnish no more than a substantial transmission of clerical order to any candid research. Iren-

æus, whom we have quoted as using the titles "elder" and "bishop" precisely as the apostles did, convertibly and applied to the ministry that were immediate successors to them in the government and guidance of the Church, might count and name the presbyter-bishops in conspicuous positions for a century or more preceding his day, and might try to confute the heretics with such an exact tradition; but farther on—a century later than his day—such tradition weakened to uncertainty, and Eusebius Pamphilius found it so confused and obscure that he resorted to conjecture in attempting to make out the chain, and his day was the date of new computations for the future and the fable of diocesan bishops, believed in as the bishops of the Bible, and therefore to be regarded as true successors of the apostles. The overturning of both Church and State which followed, through the ages, the quarrels between Greek and Latin churches of Christendom, the darkness, confusion and illiteracy of the Middle Ages, the persecutions, irruptions, tumults and spiritual despotism which suppressed the pastors, quenched the lights and hid or destroyed the diptychs and memorials of the past,—these and other causes made it for ever impossible so to track the legitimate succession of ministers anywhere as to fix our faith on lines or know the transmission of anything credible except, substantially, the continuance of faithfulness and ability among the witnesses for God, which, as we have seen, the apostles mentioned as the essence of succession to them.

In the valleys of Piedmont and Languedoc, as well as elsewhere in the isles and fastnesses of Western Europe, we have well-authenticated succession of peoples and teachers—if not by name and particular place, yet who by faithful adherence to gospel truth and

ability in witness-bearing realized the faithfulness and the ability of Him who had promised to be with them alway. On the other hand, if we could recover from oblivion every name and every ordination since the time of the apostles in the lines of so-called Catholic churches, Greek and Latin, Anglican and American, we would have to test their canonicity by the charge of Paul to Timothy ("Commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also"), or we must reject them as no matter at all of faith which never can repose on genealogies or any *régime* of pedigree as more than husks between our confidence and the substantial nutriment they have so often hidden from the eye of faith.

IV. The last great commission of our Saviour (Matt. xxviii. 19, 20), which has called into existence a Christian ministry from age to age, must be supposed to bear upon its face the cardinal points of the minister's errand, and above the tenor and the plane of the office it confers there is nothing higher, holier or more potential for this ministry to seek than missionary-going—preaching the word, administering the sacraments and practical injunction upon men of what he has commanded ourselves to observe. If in these categories there be couched anything more than they subtend, it must be, surely, of subordinate value, for these are the greatest things of his kingdom, and anything else must be subsidiary, as means to an end or as accident to substance. By virtue of "all power" in himself he made this memorable utterance without a hint of reconstructing power in apostles themselves or their successors beyond the pledge of his own presence with them "alway." The power of the keys, opening and shutting, binding and

loosing, with which they were already invested when he breathed upon them and bade them receive the Holy Ghost, may be comprehended fairly in the proper administration of sacraments, receiving the penitent and worthy and excluding the impenitent and unworthy.

But in these latter days we are called to notice another commission which is implied, it is alleged, in John xx. 51: "As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you." This has become a frequent, if not an ordinary, text at the consecration of apostle-bishops—that is, bishops in the diocesan sense, higher in rank than parochial or presbyter-bishops. Without impatiently rejecting such an application of these divine words for the arrogance and apparent impiety of such interpretation claiming that any order of men may stand for Christ as he stands for God the Father in sending, we need only see that the particle "as" in the passage must be a similitude between the parties sending, and not the parties sent—between God the Father and God the Son, and not between the Son of God and mitred worms of the dust in any exercise of authority. When we turn back a little in the same Gospel to xvii. 18, we read the intercessory prayer of Christ, not only for his immediate disciples already believing on him, but for all others given to him to be redeemed who would come to believe on him through the word to be preached in the gospel; we see the same particle of similitude "as," expressing beyond all question the relation between the parties sending, and not at all between the parties sent, in the sense of rank and similarity of power, except in the universal priesthood of all believers: "As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I sent them into the world."

V. The inferiority of ceremony to substance or a

formal ordination to the faithfulness and the ability which deserve its recognition may be illustrated in the history of a distinct class of disciples between apostles and elders, properly styled "the ministry of gifts," which may be traced through all biblical history of the Church, and perhaps "alway, even to the end of the world." Like the apostles, this ministry—including prophets and evangelists, at least—began without any form of ordination and tarried like them at Jerusalem until they would be endued with power from on high. Power came from the Holy Ghost, according to the promise of our Lord, immediately, in the form of gifts or charisms which *de facto* commissioned them to speak with other tongues than their own the wonderful works of God. This many-tongued ministry went forth, including male and female missionaries—the men to preach with full authority and the women to pray and prophesy with veiled heads and faces; the men to supplement the apostolic office in the capacity of prophets and evangelists and messengers, the women to aid the ministry of orders as exigences would call them, to help in private and social teaching and adapting a diaconate to the wants of humanity then. Even the condensed annals of inspiration make illustrious a number of these devout men and women who composed the ministry of gifts—Barsabas, the candidate with Matthias for the vacancy made by the fall and death of Judas, Ananias of Damascus, Apollos, Aquila and Priscilla, Barnabas, "men of Cyprus and Cyrene," evangelizing Antioch and giving there the name of Christian to the Church, Philip and his four "prophesying daughters," Stephen, the first martyr, who was said to be "full of faith and of the Holy Ghost" when elected by direction of the apostles

to superintend the deacons, and was so admitted to an office in the ministry of orders.

Much more might be gleaned in sacred history of the great service to Christ and his ecclesia, both the old and the new, by this intermediate and supplemental order in Church economy, which never had a norm of ordination from the hands of men, or other designation to a holy calling than possession of the special and heavenly gift. In Old-Testament times the stated instructor in the synagogue, whether priest or Levite or elder, would give place to any one who came along "in the spirit and demonstration of a prophet" to teach and preach to the ordinary assembly; and this usage was evidently continued in the New-Testament time, accounting for the freedom of our Lord, and of his apostles after him, to teach and to preach in the synagogue before its actual conversion to Christianity. Thus the ecclesiastical institute of the Bible entertained in both economies a ministry of peculiar and extraordinary endowment whose credentials were neither parchment nor the laying on of hands, but the true substance of all ordination—endowment by the Spirit of God with adequate ability and loyal faithfulness to the trust of truth.

Here we may well observe that it was always supplemental to the two conspicuously-appointed ministries—that of apostles, who were extraordinary and transient, and that of elders, who were ordinary and permanent. Whilst the former were in the field the charisms of Pentecost supplied them with prophets and evangelists who were so eminently helpful to the apostolate—the one class expounding the law and the prophets as luminously fulfilled in the history of Jesus, predicting the future, also, in so far as the forecast would be for the

furtherance of the gospel and the safety of believers; the other class, evangelists, acting as deputy apostles in laying the foundations of the Church in barbarous countries and in adjusting its primordial organizations everywhere. On the other hand, auxiliary to the ministry of orders, we see on the sacred page how lustrous the gifts of Philip and Stephen made ordination, even to the humble vocation of serving tables, which they had assumed in superintendence at the bidding of the people. So much did the shining gifts of two out of "the seven" exalt the deacon's office, and, of course, honor its ordination, that soon in subsequent history the bishops, finding associated elders an obstruction to their progress of ambition, took into their confidence and favor the deacons and elevated the whole order to the rank of preachers, multiplying the one lowly deaconship by three—subdeacons, deacons and archdeacons. This extravagance, though without warrant, is evidence in history that the drift of a ministry without ordination is toward the enhancement of orders instead of being adverse to them. Being supplementary in its usefulness to the permanent as well as the transient ministries appointed by our Lord, the fair presumption is that this ministry of gifts will continue its opportune returning till the end of time. The glorious ministration of the Spirit must ever be free, sovereign and unsearchable. Compared to the wind, which "bloweth where it listeth," is the "residue"—or, as we say familiarly, the reserve—of might and good pleasure which he retains in the dispensation of gifts. Variety has always distinguished his agency alike in garnishing the heavens and in starring the churches on earth. Doubtless the Holy Ghost will uphold the regularity of ordination as it is defined in

his own word, estimating qualifications more than persons and substance more than ceremony, ability and faithfulness more than their inauguration itself in office; but it may be his pleasure to dispense with ordination altogether when it pretends too much. When, being aggrieved by the emulations of Christian men aspiring to the dignity of office for its own sake, he left ordination in their hands to work out its own traditions, how quickly did it compromise the substance of which it was a symbol! In the time of Ignatius the ordained presbyter-bishop was only *primus inter pares;* in the time of Irenæus, a century later, he was the centre and depositary of orthodox truth; another century on, in the time of Cyprian, he was a vicegerent for Christ himself: "the Church is built upon the bishops" as well as upon the apostles themselves; then came diocesan bishops to supersede and to suppress all presbyter-bishops, monopolizing apostolic virtue and making ordination in itself a sacramental rite; and now may not ordination itself be suspended on account of such perversion, and the gospel have a free course without it for a time or times until it be reformed? It would be an irreverent presumption for us to conjecture how the Spirit of truth and holiness will restore succession throughout Christendom to the simplicity and the significance of its original prescription by Paul to Timothy; but facts in modern times and the times of our own generation constrain us to believe that a ministry of gifts without formal ordination at all is now and then sent into the field for this very purpose of teaching the world what succession ought to be in its main prerequisites of spiritual and superior gifts imparted to the faithful. We need not mention the names of lay-evangelists who by speech

and song at this day attract millions in America and in Europe to the preaching of the gospel and its becoming melodies, nor the names of renowned theologians, erudite masters, ecclesiastical dignitaries, artists, scientists, philosophers and learned professors of every kind who have hung on the lips of these ambassadors with delight and profit, recognizing a call by "the common people, who hear them gladly," as indicating that of the Holy Ghost, with silent approbation and wonder.

And what are the results of this phenomenal ministry to be gathered up already? Not by any means what was feared at the beginning—that this following of unordained men would unsettle the whole mystery of induction to the sacred office, cheapen the succession, disparage the solemnity of its vows and level to the dust the safeguards of clerical right and authority in the premises. The reverse of all such apprehension has been realized. The true doctrine of succession was never so well understood, nor the insignificance of form and routine compared with the superlative value of substance in head and heart together, ability and faithfulness conjoined and the immediate impulse of the Holy Spirit, as it would seem, abiding with his people to renovate prescriptions of his word and require them to be honored in the spirit as well as in the letter of the ministry, and as a trust more than as a heritage. Preparation for the ministry has been elevated and enlarged, theological seminaries crowded more than ever and postgraduates returning to prolong and extend the training of gifts and the acquisition of resources for the work of the faithful. The stiffest conservatism, also, has been mobilized in many places, and good men, emerging from the chancel, have proceeded through aisles, transept

and portals with familiar words of exhortation, without a book in hand, to reach the hearts of inquiring and impenitent men. These results, whether or not due entirely to the adventure of exceptional gifts for the ministry through this and other lands at the present time, should satisfy all observing men that such a mission is not a meteor, to make wonder and disturbance in its passage, but a salutary and refreshing breeze to every pulpit, blowing only form away and making more fragrant than ever the substance of regular succession, faithfulness and ability combined.

Indeed, consequences to the Church other than auxiliary and supplemental to regularity of form derived from the Scriptures would prove that such a movement of rare gifts must be challenged as self-sent rather than as sent by the Holy Ghost. He is never the author of confusion or of doubt or of indifference to rules of his own origination. Frowning only on the superstitious excess of bondage to rules themselves, and grieved at the letter when the spirit is gone, he reserves for his abode in the Church the polity of exceptional refreshing and the sovereignty of working with or without a visible instrumentality on which we count, and correcting our calculations by surprising them with new developments of his own power and the stability of nothing chartered by man for which he has not given his own word of inspiration. Long, therefore, as there will be a standing ministry of regular ordination in the Church, there will be watching by the eternal Spirit to keep it clean, simple, substantial and true, or to winnow, test and restore it by an improvised ministry of gifts without ordination at all except the impulse of his own breathing and the term at his own recall.

CHAPTER IX.

PERMANENT OFFICERS OF THE CHURCH.

THE ministry of orders are the permanent officers. The summary distinction of these given in Scripture (Phil. i. 1) is "bishops and deacons." The former is twofold, consisting of those that have oversight in both preaching and ruling, and those in ruling only or chiefly. The latter is also twofold in the distinction of male and female comprised in the one word "deacon," which is both male and female in the original term. There is no reckoning of era in the permanency of spiritual office: past, present and future must be all one duration for the ecclesia, which is just an expression of God's eternal purpose. 1 Pet. i. 2. A second essential idea in permanence must be regulation of order, the formal in organization, which is recognized in the appointed solemnity of ordination. A third conception of this permanency must be the subsidiary nature of all that is extraordinary in the history of redemption. The testimony of apostles, on which the Church is built, serves like a foundation to support the permanency of her structure "fitly joined together." The witnessing and working ministry of gifts corroborated that testimony and worked out the re-establishment of permanent order as a task assigned to them by apostles: "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee," wrote Paul to Titus.

But extraordinary gifts are not all supernatural or belonging to one epoch of spiritual Christianity, as we have already noticed. There is a natural side of sanctified endowment not commissioned by man and not recognized by his induction with hands laid on. The actuating impulse of the Holy Ghost may at the sovereign pleasure of his wisdom send, without formality, rare abilities, exceptional and opportune, to vivify the formal and resettle the settled and stir the lethargy of habit with new awakening and heartfelt return to the old simplicity of the gospel. Obviously, the need and aim of such evangelism, when it is genuine, must be, as we have intimated already, to enhance the value and appreciate the stability of all inspired ordinations in Scripture. Otherwise, if these lay evangelists become radical enthusiasts, disparaging the ministry of orders, dispensing with ordination on purpose, building churches for themselves, claiming "the keys" to open and to shut with ritual authority, and handling as they please and where they please the instituted symbols of our faith—baptism and the Lord's Supper—then we challenge the reality in them of a divine legation by the Spirit of God, and turn away from self-sent emissaries who mar the gospel of the kingdom with envy, disturbance and strife in the long run.

Here the New-Testament ministry of orders must appear the standard and umpire and determination in "discerning spirits" till the end of time. The disloyalty which would supersede their seat after gaining their ear, and rival their cathedral with tabernacles for the multitude around, and claim the gospel of the kingdom as unofficial in the propagation and sent by those who send themselves, as well without as with the representa-

tive commission which has the promise, "I am with you alway even unto the end of the world,"—must be ephemeral as the morning cloud and flower of the grass. Good may be gathered into the barns, many of the saved may be added to the Church, by such improvised evangelism, but it is a meteor, and there is no continuance available as a churchly institute. A refreshing breeze cannot be localized and fixed without stagnation and malaria to be engendered. The extraordinary, which is not needed, cannot become ordinary without renouncing its own justification in coming upon the Church self-sent and unordained. The credentials which exceptional gifts confer alone expire in the discontent of an evangelist who would do more than his proper work.

In the primitive time a special ministry of gifts did exchange, in many instances, no doubt, their itinerating errand for a settlement in some particular charge or care, and, doing so, entered into orders with regular ordination. Thus, Philip and Stephen, when chosen to the oversight of deacons, were admitted to the order in formal ordination. Barnabas and Saul, likewise—though the latter was called to be an apostle—were separated by the Holy Ghost and the divine command to a special missionary-work in Asia Minor, and were ordained for it by the Presbytery of Antioch. So the most prominent of the apostles—Peter and John, for example—would emphasize in their Epistles the elder, couched in their apostleship. "Who am also an elder," said the one; "The elder to the elect lady," said the other. The trend, therefore, of apostles and of apostolic men of supernatural gifts was directly and constantly toward the eldership as a regular succession.

The extraordinary, when supernatural, came to make the ordinary more important and permanent; and shall the extraordinary, when it is but natural endowment, be allowed to drift in the opposite direction, disparaging the ordinary as perfunctory dulness, sneering at ordination as an idle ceremony, and reducing at length the transient itinerancy which goes without ordination to the rival fixedness of another denomination? Such a genesis of natural gifts cannot be read in the natural history of permanent office.

But we do read of a standing ministry in each particular church remaining as a permanent change in the condition of Christian orders—so much, indeed, that the name "church," as we have seen, became narrow enough to denote a local assemblage of worshipping believers, though ever wide enough, also, to express the kingdom of heaven itself upon the earth in its organization, multiform as this might be in the unity of co-operation. In the old dispensation there was no distinctive ministry of the word localized and fixed in one particular habitation. The nearest approach to a standing ministry in settlements then was in the forty-eight stations of Levitical distribution over the land for the purposes of national instruction, making the tribe itinerant, more or less, among the families of Israel. Elders of the synagogue waited for the Levite or the prophet to come along, and officiated in the service of instruction only when itinerants failed to appear; so it seems to have been for some twenty years in the opening history of New-Testament organizations.

But when, at length, the miraculous outfit of Christianity was done, apostles, prophets and evangelists having finished their work of immediate witnessing and

fulfilment of prophecy and inditing canonical inspiration, the incidental task of teaching, which had always pertained to the elders' bench, became the mighty burden of our Master's great commission devolving on the elders everywhere "to teach all nations." The pressure of this great command must do what vast responsibility of any kind will always do—produce division of labor and multiply the varieties of function in the exercise of office. "Who is sufficient for these things?" Even the apostles, "endued with power from on high," had to call for help in "differences of ministration" and "diversities of operation" and "all utterance" which the selfsame Spirit that armed them with supernatural force did work in all other disciples, male and female, of that original band; and when the mightiness of miracle at length departed, leaving the great commission on a representative eldership whose natural abilities had been trained in governing and directing only or chiefly, shall we have no division of labor any more to be recognized among the officers divinely appointed?

Go to the government at Washington and survey the multitude of divided and subdivided industries—departments, bureaus, scribes, almost innumerable—which are indispensable auxiliaries of the grand episcopacy in State that governs the nation; return, after an interval of one decade, and see how much increased the number and the variety of the functions become as the nation spreads her occupation of the continent. We have here a fair analogy of the effect which our vast commission on the Church to spread her gospel occupation over all the world must have in dividing and subdividing her multiplied instrumentalities in the ministry of orders.

Take, for example, that one qualification of the presbyter-bishop who is familiarly called "elder"—"apt to teach." 1 Tim. iii. 2. We see in the original term so rendered indefinite extension of meaning—public, social, family, private, teaching—and that both active and passive, teaching and teachable. Accordingly, we see now through some ten Boards of administration, managed by ministers and elders, the labor subdivided which the Church is required by the great commission of her Lord to undertake for the conversion of the world. And even all these, with their chairmen, secretaries, treasurers and agents, are but one branch in the vast ramification of sacred toil. We must contemplate the pulpit, the press, the school, the seminary, the college, for another host at work under the great pressure of the Saviour's ascending behest, and these distinctions multiplied as the work goes on to prosper in the sublime evolution of practical wisdom itself.

Why, then, should we be hindered at the very beginning, and on the inspired page itself, by the artifice of criticism, from receiving and establishing a division of labor on the elders' bench which was inevitable as the promise of perpetual presence by our Master was sure? When the ministers of "gifts" were withdrawn, all the elders ordained could not preach, though they could teach in the family and "rule well" in their traditional authority for this function. When such of them as had the ability and the desire to assume the great supervenient commission to preach at home or abroad, they were designated accordingly by their fellow-elders, with consent of the people, and doubtless with some solemnity of form in ordination to indicate their separation from others to a ministry of the word which was to be

all-engrossing in its duties. Here, then, is the first division of labor by the weight of an imperative gospel devolved on the eldership of all dispensations, engaging some to teach mainly and to rule enough also to sustain this teaching with proper authority, engaging others to remain as they were at ruling chiefly, and teaching the rudiments of religion enough to sustain the claims of their function as Christian rulers. The lowly rulers of the ecclesia who had for ages been really "servants of all" in looking out for teachers to be invited or allowed from time to time are now to be made apostolic teachers themselves along with ruling, and remain in their places until the divine Spirit would move them to go elsewhere. Others of them, unable or unwilling to be given wholly to preach and propagate the gospel, would abide in their old calling. Not a shred of diocesan episcopacy came from apostolic hands, as we shall see again more exactly. Apostles made elders; the people made bishops. Apostles prescribed the qualifications to be discriminated in their choice; the people controlled the choice by suffrage in the respective localities, and thus came the title of "bishop" in distinction which the elder chosen gained by votes of the people and his fellow-presbyters, and which denoted only the oversight of a parish with the ordination of an elder.

In devolving on a bench of elders the paramount and permanent office of teaching and preaching, parochial episcopate and itinerant evangelism included, we must contemplate the comparative inadequacy of officers who had been chosen only for their practical wisdom in managing men and things, who, in the majority of persons, would probably be unlearned or lack the oratorical power to persuade men. And, standing at the close of miracles

in laying the foundations of the Church and extending her limits, the departure of apostles and withdrawal of miraculous gifts would altogether dismay an ordinary eldership habituated only to serve in ruling under a ministry of gifts. But an obvious expedient was at hand, natural, reasonable and inevitable, the classification of elders—some called to teach and preach in public because of suitable endowments, and to be called, properly, "teaching elders," and the others, remaining at their post, to be called "ruling elders." Yet the preachers were not to be excluded from rule nor the residuary class of rulers from private or social teaching as capacity and occasion might warrant. Thus the two classes would coalesce and co-operate, and their meeting together in council would make a Presbyterian Session.

Permanency of the Teaching Elder.

No office among men has ever been designated by so many different names as that of the Christian minister whom the apostles named "elder" and "bishop." The tracing of its functions through Holy Scripture will discover two kinds in the nomenclature—the adjective and the metaphorical, the former, of wider significance, denoting the nature of the office in general, such as bishop, elder, messenger, minister, preacher and teacher; the latter, of special and deeper significance, denoting with the force of analogy some one characteristic, such as ambassador, angel, builder, pastor, ruler, soldier, steward, workman. All these, but never *priest* (Ἱερεύς). This name belongs only to the officers of an unfinished religion—one of types and shadows. It has lost all official import in the Christian system since the actual advent and sacrifice of our eternal High Priest himself.

It is now of common use again, attached to all true believers, of both dispensations, before and after an Aaronical priesthood, Moses and Peter both affirming. (1 Pet. ii. 9 compared with Ex. xix. 6.) The compression of "presbyter" into this word "priest" ever since the sarcasm of Milton—"presbyter is only priest writ large"—has been discussed by scholars, though retained in Anglican forms, and is obsolete in all churches where there is no Judaism of literal altar and sacrifice to be consistent. The long list of names we gather in the New Testament for the Christian minister indicates abundantly the value and sufficiency of this office for the use of the Church in all the ends of her mission while time endures, and makes the presumption, therefore, that it must be a standing ministry, permanent as it is important—a relative necessity always, transmitting itself in the culture of piety and knowledge ever advancing in the future.

The permanency of this office may be considered in a threefold aspect—the office itself, continued till the end of the world; the tenure of it, till the end of life; and the duration of a bishopric in the pastoral relation, fixed as long as the Spirit and the providence of God will favor a continuance.

1. The office itself is abiding, and it is important that we pause a little to justify what seems to be self-evident in its nature—a standing ministry as a distinct order of men invested by the authority of Christ with the ordinarily exclusive right to dispense the ordinances of divine appointment. Not only does the mystic enthusiasm of the Quaker still insist that no formulated ministry is needed, but other sectaries of new denomination arise along with a philosophic radicalism diffused by Neander

to antagonize the extremes of popery and prelacy, and to reduce clerical orders from traditional ordination at the hands of those already in office to a merely conventional division of labor in the Church at the hands of the people themselves, without representation. We must argue against the discontinuance of an official ministry conferred in regular succession.

(1) The promise annexed to the great commission "Lo I am with you alway," etc., assuredly indicates durability in office. The apostles, we have seen, committing their trust to others, left the stage long since, and, unless the Church and the world be entirely changed, in the condition of human nature there must be continued the same instrumentality that was inaugurated at their departure. With significant regard for succession, Peter and John, the apostles, defined themselves, in different forms of expression, as elders also, combining with the extraordinary capacity of original witnesses the ordinary office of ruling in the Church that was ever to continue inseparable from preaching the word and discipling all nations. It is not the extraordinary and transient, but the ordinary and permanent, which inherits the fulfilment of that ubiquitous and everlasting promise upholding the ministry. Until, at least, all men have been baptized and indoctrinated to a degree of adequate enlightenment and obedience to the faith this burden of the Saviour devolves to evoke and ordain the teaching elder. To dispense with such an order now, or at any time before the consummation, is to condemn the original investiture as unwise or devoid of the forecast with which, it is admitted, even uninspired men may provide institutions lasting as time.

(2) The diction of catalogues given us by inspiration,

in which offices and functions are minutely detailed, covering all time and mingling together extraordinary and ordinary officers, miraculous endowment and common expediency, must always leave upon the mind of a candid reader a sense of perpetuity resulting from that profusion of ascension-gifts at the initial crisis of a kingdom "ordered in all things." The two most complete, if not exhaustive, enumerations are found in 1 Cor. xii. 28 and Eph. iv. 11. The former gives the chief ministry thus: "God hath set some in the Church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers," the connective particles following, "after that" and "then," detailing other functionaries under abstract terms indicating manifold uses in the Church, natural and supernatural. The other passage cited is, "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." The fair conclusion from both quotations must be that "pastors and teachers" remain the appointment by divine authority—a selection, also, by the Head of the Church—"some," not all the people alike, "some" qualified and consecrated to "the work of the ministry."

(3) The errand of extraordinary officers in the formation of a Christian Church was to found a perpetual testimony and furnish ordinary officers, unlike themselves in being permanent, as they were transient. Apostles and evangelists were confessedly engaged in laying foundations for the future and in building on a rock the structure which He who is the same yesterday, to-day and for ever called "my Church." These elders, beyond a question, were the teachers they left to abide. No other way of ministration is hinted, nor change, nor

grade, nor level, nor end. If, indeed, apostles have not passed away, but have transmitted their own ecclesiastical rank to a line of successors in authority, then our inference here is nothing; for the power deputed originally to provide a standing ministry, being extant and predominating still, may shift the organization made at first, suppress the eldership at pleasure, exalt the deacon, exclude the people and make all things uncertain.

(4) The unity of the Church, through all dispensations identical, needs a living institute as well as a canonical word to thread her form through all generations. None but the office of presbyter can do this. The patriarchal, the Levitical, the Christian, as chief, the Greek, the Latin, the Reformed, in lines of subdivision, have all thus far had the elder, of some name, as an integral factor of government in some degree, and the presumption is fair that the Angel of the covenant is with this office till the end of the world. We hear it claimed in these days that no creed or doctrinal basis can be formed to reunite Christianity, and that we should look to a certain external form of government as the only band of unification that is practicable and expedient; but if the polity proposed has repressed the eldership, teaching and ruling, and substituted the diocesan for a centre, it has lost the connection of Church visibility in Scripture, preferred Nicene to Bible Christianity and broken the link of New-Testament with Old-Testament ecclesia; and the claim is preposterous.

(5) It belongs to the analogy of grace in its kingdom on earth to be magnified by visible inadequacy of means, and therefore to intrust the treasure of saving truth by which the world is discipled to some earthen vessels

which stand midway in representation between monarchic authority and the multitude governed. Reserved to the former, the world might reckon that an absolute unity of administration will explain the perpetual conservation of Christianity. Deposited with the latter, men would suppose they are naturally religious beings, and that the gospel of this kingdom descends by the force of sentiment in the bosom of humankind. But the constitution of a few, without concentration on the one hand and without diffusion on the other, conveys through all succeeding time the presence of a divine Head by his Spirit, whose power alone sustains an instrumentality so fragile and makes "the foolishness of preaching" "the wisdom of God and the power of God" in the salvation of men. Thus the surviving miracle of a supernatural preservation of our hope in Christ, despite the weakness, folly and disunion of his own adherents and heralds, will remain till "time shall be no longer" in the publication of his grace.

(6) The analogy of tradition also demands an order of live successors in its trinity of safe and adequate transmission. The written document and the parental relation have never sufficed for such transmission, even when the former was plain and the latter most faithful, as under the Old-Testament economy. Then the priest's lips had to keep knowledge, and the people had to learn the law at his mouth. How much greater that necessity now, when the inspired documents have become a magazine which all sciolism seeks to corrupt or impugn, and the family has become loosened by unrestricted affinities and world-wide commerce! Without presbyters now and ever to shed the mystery of godliness from educated lips and in language understood by the people,

the "established testimony and appointed law" might be lost or hidden to the children of generations to come.

(7) The instructions given to elders indicate the permanency of their office. The charges, the duties, the qualifications, alike involve the indefinite succession: "The things which thou hast heard of me, among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also." This definite selection is evidently concerned for a future which is undefined. The qualifications elsewhere detailed more minutely, and suggesting the duties devolved on successors, all imply succession while time endures. See Tit. i. 6–9, where, identifying elders with bishops, the apostle anticipates, with a prevision of Christian life which no perfection of culture can ever transcend and no exigences of the faith can ever give up, the becoming accomplishments of an elder's adaptation: "If any be blameless; the husband of one wife; having children not accused of riot or unruly; not self-willed, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre, a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate; holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers."

(8) The necessities of the Church as a society require a standing ministry. As well may we conceive a society existing without rules to constitute and govern it as without selected representatives to expound and enforce them; and when we contemplate the social compact of the Church as formed not merely to exist continually as she began at the pristine organization, but to expand immeasurably and make progress through the ages with

the constitution given by her Founder—as it were, a stone cut out without hands and rolling on till the whole earth is covered with the magnitude of her development—we may be sure that the agencies which propel the movement are steady and constant as they are true in working out an eternal purpose. Merely spontaneous vigor and zeal in each member of the vast community of believers could not avail for the continuity ordained. Individual responsibility is always felt to be little as the society is large, and unavailing as the work is arduous and the result momentous. Even at the infancy of the Christian Church and amidst the profusion of ardent impulses from Jerusalem to Antioch and the glowing fellowship of prophets and teachers there, a call was made from heaven for special work to be done by special men who were named in the call: "The Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them." The self-same Spirit will not now cease to separate a special order of men to "wait on ministering," when private spontaneity has become so inert and social enthusiasm so transient and mutable that no missionary work on earth is done by denominations which have no standing ministry at home.

(9) Facts should be conclusive on this point. Office implies gift, of which it is the visible organ. The multiplied offices and functions of office described in the primitive records of inspiration are to be discriminated by facts only as to their temporary or their permanent nature. When supernatural gifts or charisms of Pentecostal time ceased to be observed, the corresponding offices thereon were discontinued. When the ordinary ministration of the Spirit remained to endow spiritual

men with faithfulness and ability for teaching or for ruling, or for both, the corresponding offices remained to be filled and recognized perpetually as the ascension-gifts of Messiah under the glorious ministration of his own Spirit. It is a divinely-recorded fact that a ministry of orders existed simultaneously with that of apostles and that of gifts merely; and the drift of durability in all the arrangements of that crisis tended to make the first to be last as well as the last to be first. The immemorial office of the past was ordained to be the perpetual office of the future. It is a humanly-recorded fact that under some form and with some degree of power and influence the elder has existed in all the historical churches of time, and it is the record of all experience and observation that the meeting-house enthusiasm which begins without a teaching eldership ordained, and which sits in mystic silence for the Spirit to move any man or any woman to speak, at length subsides and languishes without comparative duration at all among the visibilities of earth.

II. The second thought on the permanency of sacred office is investment for life: "It is a snare to the man who devoureth that which is holy, and after vows to make inquiry" (Prov. xx. 25); "Suffer not thy mouth to cause thy flesh to sin; neither say thou before the angel, that it was an error" (Eccl. v. 6.); "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." Rev. ii. 10. Life, at the longest, is but a brief term for commission to preach the everlasting gospel. Soldiers in this warfare have no discharge; workmen on this building have no dismission; watchmen on these walls have no retirement. Ministers even of a transient class were never invested with their office for a term of

years, and no one voluntarily forsook it except, like Demas, in swimming away from the shipwreck of his faith. Considerations which may dissuade a man from entering the ministry will not excuse him for laying it down at his convenience or his pleasure. Other parties in the solemnity of his consecration—God and the Church, the Spirit and the bride—are not to be constrained merely by his judgment and his will. His call and qualifications have been recognized as true and fitting by those who are divinely appointed to judge; and retroaction, in the gravity of such a matter, must unite the same parties all in the reversal of ordination. It is not competent for a presbyter and a Presbytery to manage divestment with mutual consent alone. "God is judge of all." One ordinance of his appointment can be set aside only by another of the same authority and suitable in its application to such a case.

In demitting the ministry fault is apt to be ascertained somewhere. Ignorance, inadvertence, presumption, hasty impulse, vain imagination and carnal expediency play their part on one side; inattention, impatience, partisan indulgence and perfunctory tape on the other side. These, and such-like reprehensible things, should be touched with some degree of censure by the ordinance of discipline. It may be slight, but it should be something. Even a motion to deliberate and inquire and to search out the cause in a judicatory—which must publish to the Church and the world a dissolution of solemn vows when it is made—can scarcely fail to put blame upon one party or upon both "before all," with the moral effect of rebuke for lightness, at least, in the due solemnities of a spiritual administration.

Without incurring censure men may indeed mistake

their calling. Talents may be wanting; piety may be doubtful; sickness, obloquy or persecution may supervene to diminish or destroy the usefulness of ministers; but let them desist for a time rather than demit the office. All discovery of unfitness short of censurable offence must have other recourse than voluntary abandonment of the calling. Inadequate ability—which might be found among angels—must work on with redoubled earnest and industry. Insufficient piety must repair to the Fountain of grace and mercy for a sense of vocation and renewal of strength, and half the qualifications which avail not in one part of the field may succeed well in another, for every ordained minister belongs to the Church at large in his functions, and his field is the world.

Strenuous persistency like this makes more than manhood in office: it magnifies the office and extols the sufficiency of God only. And we doubt not that the feeling of being shut up to the ministry, like that of being shut up to the faith, has in many an instance brought an agonizing minister to the throne of grace with such importunity of desire as to procure from the Spirit of Jesus a signet for his commission which he had never experienced before. We may well believe that no sincerely anxious officer will ever mistake his calling and find himself reduced to the necessity of renouncing the ministry for want of conscious vocation. The merciful "High Priest of our profession" will authenticate what his visible court on earth may have unadvisably conferred if the wretched functionary will persevere to plead for such a grace, feeling that it is woe unto him if he preach not the gospel, and still greater woe if he bring upon the gospel suspicion, discredit and shame by

an open relinquishment. In vain, however, may this ultimate vocation be expected by the man who ventures lightly and presumptuously to intrude. It is only the mistake of an honest intention at the threshold which may hope to have all that is wanting overtaken by the long-suffering grace and goodness of the Saviour.

III. The ordinary fixedness of pastoral relation belongs to the general conception of permanence in the office of a teaching elder. In this relation the Holy Ghost has made him bishop with oversight of a particular flock. This divine Director was particular from the beginning to govern the movement of his ministers in regard to regions and localities of their work. Even the general oversight which was committed to the apostles had to follow the constraint of their will and wisdom by the Spirit to go or to refrain from going to one place and not to another by the sovereignty of his direction. Acts xvi. 7. No itinerancy, therefore, should be made machinal by a polity of the Church, but every pastor should be left to the fellowship of the Spirit to guide his settlement or to transfer his ministry from one flock to another; and if the Church as a body should have no machinery to keep him moving, still less should he make a machine of his own will under the impact of indolence, taste or expediency without spiritual power on the conscience to govern his continuance or his change. Prayerless decision is bad omen.

(1) The very name of "pastor" intimates a steady continuance with one flock, attention to the lambs in successive generations as they grow up in his nurture, and familiar acquaintance with the temper, conditions and wants of the grown, acquired only in the course of a durable relation.

(2) The fair economy of ministerial support, according to the Scriptures, must import a fixed relation between pastor and people. It is a regulated exchange, and not a precarious barter, that temporal benefits be returned for spiritual privilege and the nutriment of souls. The word of God has enjoined it with metaphors or analogies taken from the established and permanent reciprocities of nature itself and the equities of common sense (1 Cor. ix.): "Who goeth a warfare, at any time, on his own charges? Who planteth a vineyard and eateth not the fruit thereof, or who feedeth a flock and eateth not of the milk of the flock? If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing, if we should reap your carnal things?" "Even so hath the Lord ordained, that they who preach the gospel should live of the gospel." Similitude of this kind implies the dealing of a settled life and must be colorless and inappropriate to the travelling and transitory connections of clerical life, whether this be an interchanging itinerancy, stated supply or hiring by the month or by the single year. Adequate returns to the ministry are all indefinite, and we are to wait for them with indefinite patience.

(3) Charges to the eldership in regard to the watchfulness of their station bear the presumption of indefinite future in a tenure of local office. (Acts xx. 28, 29): "Take heed therefore to yourselves, and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the Church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know that after my departure shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock." If these elders of Ephesus were not permanently settled there, but transient as the apostle him-

self, why were they warned of future dangers to that flock, out of the hearing of the flock themselves, at Miletus, where they were sent for to meet him? Whatever those elders were, whether teaching, and related so to the Church at large, or ruling elders, and therefore local, they would have been warned in the presence of the people of dangers to come on that people if these ministers had not been identified with them in permanent relation. The indirectness of this argument does not diminish its force. On the hypothesis only of a fixed relation of those elders are all the circumstance and parlance of that interview natural. The emphasis with which he speaks of their particular oversight being made by the Holy Ghost imports too much reverence for that mighty Spirit to consist with the assumption that he is ever waiting to dissolve one relation and constitute another, as often as the love of novelty or change or the exhaustion of one's homiletic store may impel a man to shift his labors to another field.

Other charges in the apostolic Epistles warrant the same conclusion. When Paul salutes "the saints which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons," we reasonably infer that these officers are abiding there as permanently as the people themselves. When he writes to Titus, "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things which are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I have appointed thee," we can hardly imagine that this evangelist was instructed to make travelling preachers of these local appointees, to be on the move by force of ordination instead of remaining identified with the settled inhabitants to supply that lack of service which itinerating apostles and evangelists had to leave behind.

(4) The advantages of itinerancy to the Church are overbalanced by the attending evils. The family relation of the preacher will be damaged by constant removals. The first care of pastoral fidelity is a man's own household. His children should have the endearment of early associations, the moulding affections and friendships of a settled home, and should be saved from the rupture of tendrils which seek to entwine what is near them and what cannot frequently be broken without making havoc in the sensibilities of our nature. The benignant Master we serve can hardly be supposed to warrant the model of a well-ordered family which the pastor is concerned to exhibit thus to be marred of necessity by either a system of change or an individual inclination to shift the pastoral tie. Itinerancy belongs rather to celibacy of the clergy; and if not, the tendency is to separate them as an order too much distinct from the people, as the sodalities of the Romish Church, having peculiar interests and supported out of a common treasury, without that immediate communication of him that is taught to him that teacheth in all good things which binds pastor and people together in sympathetic unity. Other evils might be intimated with appeal to facts observed, such as invidious comparison of one minister with another when they come in quick succession, appointed rather than chosen; itching ears, captious criticism, superficial feelings or fastidious faultfinding, which cannot fail to result in alienation, indifference, or perhaps contempt for the whole class of God's ambassadors.

(5) The fixedness of pastoral relation is matter of fact in the transmission of authentic history. At an early period in the Middle Ages we read of two kinds of churches, or places of meeting for public worship.

They were called *tituli* and *martyria*. The latter name was given to places occupied once a year in honor of some martyred saint, but the former were places of stated and constant worship, and were called *tituli* because of the names they fastened on the officiating ministers respectively. Thus we have "Cyprian of Carthage," "Ambrose of Milan" and "Augustine of Hippo," and occasionally the proper name of the man would be transmuted wholly from the patronymic to the local. This fact plainly indicates that itinerancy could not have been the normal condition of presbyters or bishops in supplying ordinances of the gospel to the churches, or we would have long names to read in Church history and the pages thereof would hardly suffice for the record of titles.

This whole argument for indefinite duration of the pastoral tie at one and the same conventicle, where the Holy Ghost makes the elder a bishop in presence of the particular people he is called to serve and oversee, might be much extended, but not without trenching on the lessons of pastoral theology, the problems of casuistry and the province of polemical debate. It is not so much a dogma as a consistency or a part of symmetrical government to be inserted here only as a logical point in rounding off the notion of permanency in the sacred office. The rule is almost overlaid with exceptions. There must be frequent occasions in the providence of God for a change of pastoral settlement; and if we had in Scripture a demonstration of direct words against it, there might be a sad entanglement of conscience in many a great and good minister of Christ, and a constrained submission to ills which might destroy his usefulness and his happiness at life-work. But ordered, as

it is, in hints and in warranted inferences merely, we are authorized to make fixedness the rule and removal the exception, and one which slight indications of the divine will as to any change proposed must lead the conscientious minister to pause with anxious inquiry and with much prayer, yielding to it only when it is pressed upon him by the indubitable hand of God.

CHAPTER X.

PARITY OF MINISTERS.

PERMANENCY of any office or institute leads us, by the logic of events, to a contemplation of equality in the ultimate distribution of power among men, especially as the spread of its mission becomes universal. Time in its duration must bring down toward a level disparity of height among all the works of nature, providence and grace. In unison with Oriental conceptions of ruling power, the Church wisely began its government in patriarchal absoluteness of authority; and then, as the family grew to a people in religion, a lower level of three orders in the constitution of hierarchy began the distribution of order and authority with some degree of equity. And yet, while this triad, with the help of theocracy, was fulfilling its errand, holy men of old, speaking as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, foresaw a lower and broader level to be reached when universality would be attained by representatives of the people in gospel diffusion, making that gauge of levels and bottom of altitudes, the sea, their metaphor of rank when the knowledge of the Lord shall fill the earth "as the waters cover the sea."

Monarchy and aristocracy cannot have a long future in the Church. When he was training a band of witnesses, whom he named apostles, and observed their emulations

and rivalry in aspiration for pre-eminence, Jesus uttered the only distinct institutional mandate that dropped from his lips—the parity of ministers and destined equality of service in his kingdom: "And there was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest. And he said unto them, The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors. But ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve."

So far as organization was done by the apostles, they originated no system of polity at all, but evidently copied, as we have seen, the model of the synagogue, adapting its principal feature—two or three, or more, coequal elders—to Christian life and worship. It is remarkable that directions in the selection of these presbyters and their qualifications and duties are pastoral more than ecclesiastical. There is nowhere an emphasis on office itself, even when it is called "a good work." 1 Tim. iii. 1. The notability is upon the qualifications and character of an aspirant who "desires it"—"blameless," "vigilant," "sober," "of good behavior," etc. There is nowhere a graduated scale of office in the Church, higher and lower, mentioned in revelation. We read of division, and even of subdivision, of work to be done officially, and of "double honor" awarded to both divisions, and especially to one, and this the more laborious. 1 Tim. v. 17. But even the subdivision made under a pressure of responsibility is a distribution of work on the same level of rank.

Contrasted with all this unscaled delineation of office in Scripture is that of diocesan bishop in modern prelacy

—a bishop of bishops, hierarch in long gradation, a man of three ordinations for himself, a lone ordainer of others, an apostle by tradition and a high priest of sacramental religion. That such an officer cannot be identified at all with the bishop of the Bible, Dr. Lightfoot, bishop of Durham, England, frankly concedes, and yet in this country we still need a demonstration of this from Scripture.

The first passage to be cited is Acts xx. 28: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers (bishops) to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." This exhortation is given to a number of elders whom the apostle had sent for to Ephesus to meet him at Miletus. It needs no comment to manifest the identity of elder and bishop where the term "overseers" (ἐπισκόπους)—bishops—is so expressly given to elders, with no shade of difference in the signification but that of special duty or oversight devolving on elders when they are actually put in charge of a particular flock. The bishop is not called even chief, or *primus inter pares*, by this convertible name.

The next passage (Phil. i. 1) does not mention the word "elders," but "bishops and deacons" only, and the plural number of the former—excluding, of course, the notion of one bishop presiding over others—indicates only a number of elders who were invested with the trust of an oversight either in a collegiate pastorate or in different particular churches: "Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons." The salutation here is peculiar in that it is addressed to officers along with the sainted people who

are mentioned first. All other greetings of the kind in other Epistles are addressed to the people only, as constituting the churches, and the apostle Paul was so intent on this subject of writing as—occasionally, at least —to insist on his own words being read to all, either with or without a verbal comment by officers: "I charge you by the Lord that this epistle be read unto all the holy brethren." 1 Thess. v. 27. The reason for a special mention here of bishops and deacons would seem to be simply the tenor of gratitude in that letter to Philippi for the generous relief of his necessities, in which the bishops and deacons together were doubtless active and influential agents. Obviously, the quotation means that the body of believers were first in consideration; the elders next, in their consistory, making a plural number and called "bishops," in parochial oversight as their burden of duty; and the deacons last, in the special work of collecting and disbursing the benefactions of all. And without any such analysis the comprehensive word must mean that elders are called "bishops" in the detail of pastoral duty.

The third passage which demonstrates the identity of elder and bishop is Tit. i. 5: "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city as I had appointed thee. If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children, not accused of riot or unruly. For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not self-willed, not soon angry, not given to wine," etc. The further enumeration in this reason for carefulness at the choice of men for the eldership, being still more exactly predicates of the right men for the pastorate of a particular church, adds to the

force of this text in proving what is manifest on its face to any honest reader—that elder and bishop are identical in rank; and the same qualifications become more pointed and minute when the elder takes charge of a particular flock and is called "bishop" on this account. The same office, on one side, is designated by name for the mature dignity of age, and on the other side by name for the special activity of functions in supervising and serving the interests of one congregation.

The fourth proof-text comes from the inspiration of Peter, "an apostle of Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. v. 12): "The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed; feed the flock of God, which is among you, taking the oversight thereof," etc. This oversight is expressed by the participle ἐπισκοποῦντες ("being bishops thereof"). Here the apostle calls himself a fellow-elder, as the apostle John does, also, in the superscription of his Second and Third Epistles, indicating that eldership is the generical office of the Christian ministry for all ages, and that all above it in rank is ephemeral, and all below it, as bishop and deacon, is but titular service, which the levels of Presbyterial benches, councils or assemblies, legitimately direct and govern.

It may seem to intelligent readers a superfluity thus to expand the Bible demonstration that elders and bishops were the same in rank of office when the apostles finished their direction of the Christian Church, inasmuch as it is conceded now by prelacy itself that the two names were first used convertibly for the same office. The concession is reluctant, however, and had not been made when the Ordinal of the English Church was composed,

else the scriptures giving qualifications and duties of elders would hardly have been cited for the ordination of diocesan bishops created by the State. Nor is the concession popularized even yet and in this country, where Bibles overlaid with cathedral assertion are in the hands of the people. The title "bishop" can hardly be retained at all in designating parochial pastors, which is confessedly the only scriptural use of the term. It would be an interesting arbitration of common sense to have the people generally invited to decide on the one side between Dr. Hammond and Bishop Pearson, who held that all the bishops of the New Testament must have been prelates of rank superior to elders, and on the other side with Dr. Dodwell, Dr. Whitby and Bishop Hoadly, and now with Dr. Lightfoot, holding with us that they were all presbyters (or elders) only, and that no prelates existed until the apostles, whose successors they claim to be, passed away without even a color of testamentary heritage.

This contest continues, and the people do not seem to know it because of the continued clamor and boast about apostolic succession, which, without one word of warrant in the canon of Scripture, and without one trace of authentic history for two hundred years after Christ, persists to assert itself because it is Nicene and of imperial birth and breeding; and this notwithstanding the fact, as we have seen, that John the beloved disciple and Peter the rock-disciple both called themselves elders, and the latter "fellow-elder." So, if apostles identified themselves with elders then, and if elders identify themselves with apostles now, merging bishop in apostle, what becomes of "three orders" in the teaching ministry, of which we hear so much? Besides, if we adopt the post-apostolic hier-

archy with Jerome under protest, and excuse it for the reason he did—because visible unity required the apostle-bishop for the sake of expediency in ruling against schism—we tarnish with misnomer the office of apostle, who was not a ruler, but a witness for Christ, in laying the foundations of the gospel and in promulging the testimony everywhere to Jews and Gentiles. Apostles were missionaries more than rulers, teachers more than masters. They inherited and bequeathed a polity which they approved, but never contrived. Elders are the only constituted magistracy of the Christian Church, and their charter is "of old time," as acknowledged by Christ and his apostles.

Parity of rank in the ministry may be vindicated in every particular of superiority alleged in hierarchical systems of church government. A brief survey of disparities here will suffice. The five particulars in which elders are made inferior to bishops are confirmation as a rite, in which the baptized members are admitted to full communion, the exercise of discipline, ordination to office, the deacon as a preacher and the extent of jurisdiction.

I. It is claimed in prelacy that the diocesan bishop only has the authority of admitting to full privileges of the Church those who have been baptized in infancy or age, and the ceremony with which this is done has become in his hands the rite of confirmation. A definition of this rite is difficult, if not impossible, and the description of it varies among both Romanists and Protestant Episcopalians. Probably the following, in Bishop Hobart's *Companion for the Altar*, is the most generally accepted: "It is a ratification, on the part of those who receive it, of their baptismal engagements, and a confirmation by almighty God of all the privileges

of their baptism. The bishops are to confirm all that have repented and are made disciples in the washing of regeneration by laying their hands upon them and invoking the aid of the Holy Spirit, that they may continue Christ's faithful soldiers and servants to their lives' end, as St. Peter and St. John did with the disciples of Samaria."

(1) Examine the cited proof-texts, beginning with the reference to Peter and John at Samaria, mentioned in the last clause of the description (Acts viii. 14–17): "Now, when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: who, when they were come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Ghost, for as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus." This passage, obviously, has not the slightest bearing upon any ritualistic performance for the generations following. It relates only to the charisms of Pentecost, the transactions of a miraculous time by the hands of an extraordinary apostleship; and even their hands were not more potential than might have been those of Philip the deacon, by whom the Samaritans had been evangelized; for the Holy Ghost descended, in answer to their prayers, with those supernatural effects which were so palpable at Jerusalem in answer to prayer, and visibly symbolized by "cloven tongues, like as of fire, sitting upon each of them." Something like this, and palpable to the senses, must have been the manifestation, or Simon the sorcerer would not have offered money to buy the power the apostles had in that sort of confirmation.

The next proof is found in Acts xix. 1–7, which we

have only to read and dismiss for the same reason—its absolute irrelevancy: "And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues and prophesied." If our modern prelates were veritable apostles continued, and the action of laying on their hands were attended with marvellous phenomena of gifts as the effect of confirmation, we could not receive it as a rite perpetual on the explanation of Bishop Hobart—that inward grace was conferred in those acts of apostolic hands of which the outward marvels were indication at that time. This fancy is mere assertion, and is inconsistent with facts of Scripture and experience. The gift of tongues never was, and never will be, the sure exponent of confirmed grace in the heart: "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name; and in thy name have cast out devils; and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."

(2) It is singular and significant that portions of Scripture which give us the words "confirm," "confirmed" and "confirming" in the Authorized Version and the recent Revision also, and which in their places mean the same thing that is said to be imported in the meaning of confirmation as a rite, are not cited at all for the warrant of its practice. Acts xiv. 22; xv. 32, 41; 1 Cor. i. 8. Is it because the grace of Jesus Christ and the exhortations of his word on the lips of missionary-men, without the laying on of hands or any ritualistic form, is the true method of confirmation for souls under the gospel? Or is it the affectation of apostolic dignity and a superior grade, to be reckoned the same as that of

John, Peter and Paul, which led the diocesans to force the Scriptures and wrest the temporal sense without necessity, in order to crystallize into a rite for themselves alone to handle the precious words of Holy Writ which were given to "drop as the rain and distill as the dew" in confirming souls "unto the end"? It is also curious that another passage which led John Calvin to suggest the apostolic antiquity of confirmation as a rite, in his commentary on the text, but not in his *Institutes* (where it is rejected), was not included with proof-texts by the *Companion for the Altar*. Was this also because it does not signify three orders in the ministry?

(3) Hebrews vi. 1, 2 is the text to which we refer, and the only one in the Bible that has the least plausibility in favor of confirmation as a primitive rite: "Therefore, leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of the resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment." This "laying on of hands," mentioned here as an elementary feature of the Christian system, has a variety of senses in both the Old and the New Testament, and any of them more familiar than the ceremony of any rite. It was a gesture used in patriarchal blessing, in prayer put up for one when sacrifice was offered with confession of sin, in solemn consecration to office, in benediction, as our Saviour laid his hands on little children to bless them and on the sick to heal them, and when, in imitation of our Lord, the apostles laid their hands on the sick to heal them, and on the deacons to ordain them, and on converts when God was pleased to answer prayers by shed-

ding down on these the supernatural gifts. Now, to say that this last occasion of the gesture, to be imitated by all succeeding bishops of higher degree made by man, is the allusion of the Bible in this place, must arrantly beg the question even if we should accept this rite itself to be continued in the churches, and admit that the gifts of Pentecost were, in a figure, just the same as the Christian graces for all time, which are confirmed only by the word and Spirit of God. How much more sensible the opinion of Cartwright, that this phrase denotes by metonymy the mode of ordination by the laying on of hands for the institution itself of a standing ministry! This, indeed, as a fundamental tenet infinitely more than as a ceremony, is categorically fitted here in the enumeration of repentance, faith, baptism, the resurrection and eternal judgment.

(4) The disparagement of baptism—or, as Bishop Hobart calls it, "washing of regeneration"—theoretically and practically done by the rite of confirmation, is inconsistent with the authority of Christ, who commanded us to baptize all that are discipled by the gospel, without the slightest intimation of any supplementary action needed after an interval of years in order to continue and confirm its benefits by countersigning the sanction and seal we have in the initiatory ordinance itself. Rebaptism is not allowed either by popery or by prelacy, and even lay baptism is protected against any repetition in both systems, because confirmation is reserved as a rite by which defective baptism is cured and the neglect of it is overtaken and the sanctification of it realized and its validity reached by the retroactive efficacy of this handling by a prelate. A reserve like this could not have been the mind of Christ

or of his apostles when the completeness of baptism as a token of admission to the kingdom was pronounced often and emphatically. Surely, Peter and John at Samaria and Paul at Ephesus, in laying their hands instantly on the converts, when the fact of a baptism was assured, that they might receive the Holy Ghost, held no interval of preparation for another ceremony in order to be reassured that the efficacy of baptism continued and might be reserved, corrected or confirmed, by the laying on of hands.

(5) The disparagement of baptism itself is aggravated by the humiliation of the baptizer, also, in reserving a subsequent confirmation by the hands of a superior order. That great ecclesiastic of the fourth century, Jerome, weak in his conformity as he was firm in his judgment, murmured against this usage of the Latin Church, saying that committing the benediction of such a rite to the diocesan bishops was "rather in honor of the priesthood than warranted by any law." With him Augustine agreed, both of them regarding the nature of this rite as merely benediction in form and import, as we pronounce it at the close of public worship with uplifted hands over the congregation. The whole North African Church dissented from Rome and agreed with the Greek churches in assigning to the presbyter, as a parochial bishop, the ceremony of confirmation. Indeed, the incongruity of transferring it to diocesan bishops was one of the charges made by Photius of Constantinople against Nicolaus of Rome in the ninth century, and remained one of the causes for a final disruption between the Eastern and Western branches of the old Catholic Church. The Greeks were right, in all reason, if such a rite should exist at all. It is a cruel

humiliation to the pastor that an overseer must come with periodical visitation and superior title and do for the young people and catechumens of his charge what their own shepherd must not do, though competent and required to confirm in every scriptural way those whom he has baptized and taught the truth as it is in Christ.

(6) Although it is proper that in every particular church there should be an emphasis put upon the occasion of admitting baptized members to full privileges in communion, it is enough to charge them in the public assembly with the duties and responsibilities of a full profession by exhortation, encouragement and supplication to God for his blessing. More than this, and other than this, to inform them virtually that they were regenerated in baptism, and that the efficacy of that ordinance, where it has been lost, is now restored, where it has been defective is now completed, and where it has continued is now increased and confirmed to the end, must always tend more or less to lull the confirmed in carnal security, to make benediction a sacrament, and the sacrament salvation, and salvation a formalism of perfunctory continuance. Doubtless, truly spiritual professors will escape such tendency, but not without some detriment, which always attends unauthorized solemnities.

Parity in Discipline.

II. We claim for every ordained minister an equal power of discipline over members—that is, the exercise of authority in the censure of offences against the order and purity of the Church by enforcing the laws given for this purpose. That all ministers of the word are alike empowered in this respect may be argued—

(1) From the tenor of their commission, beginning with its preface: "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth, go ye therefore," etc. It is obvious that no intervening depositories of power can come, without usurpation, between the supreme fountain and the ministers of word and sacraments in any department of ecclesiastical administration. Especially is it unauthorized and presumptuous when such intervention subordinates the elder and actually supersedes him in disciplinary measures with his own flock. These ministers of the word and sacraments are called "stewards" in 1 Cor. iv. 1. Stewards had the superintendence of households, bestowed immediately by the master, and in great houses wore a key upon the shoulder for a badge of office. Hence the use of this emblem by our Lord in giving the keys to his representative apostles, the original witnesses, who were themselves ministers of the word pre-eminently, and governed the Christian Church as preachers incomparably more than as rulers. Opening and shutting by the use of the keys go together. The same officers, unquestionably, are authorized to admit and to exclude. The door of admittance they open is baptism, which ministers of the word are commanded to administer, and the door of privilege to which members enter by baptism in form is to be shut in the deprivation of privilege by the same authority that had opened the access.

(2) A proof of this fair equation is to be derived, also, from the very nature of all warranted discipline by the church. Its elementary definition is an authorized application of divine words to ascertained offences. No ministry of man has more than declarative punishment in its force at any degree of culpability in the

offender. It must be readily conceded that preaching itself contains warning, reproof and rebuke, in its ordinary ministration of the pastorate especially; and if the lower forms of infliction by the word are thus confessedly in the hands of an eldership, where shall the line be drawn at which the presbyter, who is a parochial bishop, shall desist, and the diocesan bishop assume exclusively the process of censure? This arbitrary distinction comes, unquestionably, from an imperial origin which made the secular diocese religious and armed the diocesan with a sword more than moral in its edge and other than spiritual in its aim.

(3) The names and the attributes given by the Bible to the New-Testament elder import the utmost disciplinary power competent to any spiritual officer. "Presbyter" itself, in its official use, meant from of old a judge and ruler at the gate. The same word or words in Hebrew to denote the rulers over all Israel originally selected at the bidding of Moses to aid him in the administration of rule (Deut. i. 13; Mic. iii. 9) are translated in the Septuagint by a term or terms which thrice in one chapter of Hebrews (xiii. 7, 17, 24) denominate ordinary ministers of the word. The same term that is used by Thucydides, Demosthenes, Herodotus and Plato for designating rulers of armies, cities and kingdoms is used in Rom. xii. 8; 1 Thess. v. 12; 1 Tim. v. 17 to signify elders of the Christian Church. Every power deputed to church-officers we find included in three Greek terms (used as verb, participle or noun), *ἡγέομαι*, *προΐστημι*, *ποιμαίνω*, and each one of them, undoubtedly, applied to the simple presbyter of Scripture. If, then, we believe that the sacred writers were guided by infallible wisdom in the selection of significant words

for designating the legitimate officers of the Church, we must believe that gospel ministers, as such, are clothed with paramount disciplinary power in the exercise of their appropriate jurisdiction, amenable only to assemblies of themselves, and to no higher personage on earth.

(4) Facts bear witness that elders are chief in the exercise of ecclesiastical authority, whatever its form may be. They were associated with apostles on terms of equal commission at the first General Assembly constituted in Christendom. Acts xv. There were not two houses in that convocation—one of apostles and the other of elders and "brethren"—nor was it a matter of routine ecclesiasticism or debate about liturgical phrases which engaged the deliberation of "apostles and elders" together, but the most momentous question of the age for a living missionary Church—how far the trammels of Judaism should hinder and load a free gospel and the defunct ceremonial of hierarchical time should trail on the glorious liberty of faith in Christ. Barnabas and Paul, with "no small dissension and disputation" at Antioch with Judaizers, could not settle the question without reference to a general council of "apostles and elders" at Jerusalem; and when the decision was made, Paul and Barnabas were associated with acknowledged elders—Judas and Silas—in promulging the decrees by appointment of the council. Now subtract the transitory element from the constituency of that supreme arbitration of faith and love and duty in the first age, and elders remain the only true successors in representative power. Other facts might be cited to the same effect. Pecuniary trusts in relief of suffering communities and sustentation of the infant

Church were first laid at the feet of apostles and afterward sent to the elders, their only visible successors in the highest authority of distribution. Another fact in this connection should be noticed in the ministry of Paul, "an apostle" of special mention as the disciplinarian at Corinth. Instead of proceeding thither with bodily presence to direct the process of trial and punishment in the case of a profligate offender, he sends only the urgency of advice, and relegates process to the constituted authorities of the church among the Corinthians themselves. These, of course, were the elders whom he ordained, or advised to be ordained, "in every church."

(5) The example of apostolic dealing with the church at Corinth in the conduct of discipline suggests the inexpediency, as well as the want of warrant, in procedures of discipline, to entrust the practical exercise to any one superior to the parochial officers, who have the immediate oversight of membership and of the intimacies of social life in each particular church. The tact is wanting, necessarily, where familiar acquaintance with character is wanting, and the diocesan bishop, whether distant or near, cannot possess what the parochial bishop or pastor knows of origin, growth, environment, etc., which modify sound judgment in the censure of wickedness. The most pious of prelates must, therefore, often drop the reins in fear of making mistakes, and must allow folly and sin to be rampant where the unity he represents was made ostensibly the best efficient in the repression of evil. Never does the word of God repose the safety of his Church in the unity of one man, pope or prelate, placed over numbers of men, but the contrary. Solomon said, "Where no counsel is, the people

fall; but in the multitude of counsellors there is safety." A greater than Solomon said, in directing an ultimate appeal, "Tell it to the church." Who can believe that our Lord meant by this, "Tell it to the bishop," a dignitary who makes a judicial circuit in coming, or comes only when sent for, to take cognizance of causes outside of his personal knowledge and reported to him by rumor? Take, also, the words of Peter (1 Pet. v. 2, 3), "The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness: feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof" (acting as bishops thereof), and read them in the parlance of prelacy for a comment: "The elders which are among you I exhort, who am not an elder, but a bishop, and not a witness chiefly, but a ruler: feed the flock of God which is among you, without taking the oversight as bishops, for I am the only bishop, and am soon to leave my oversight to successors like myself, who will be over you in rank to exercise the authority of discipline exclusively." Is not this contradiction to Peter?

(6) The apostles did not exercise discipline themselves except in words of preaching and epistolary counsel. The local officers in particular churches were authorized to conduct the process themselves. The example of Paul in the sway of his authority among the Corinthians has been cited often to the contrary, but this only apparent exception is easily explained. He was the father of that church (1 Cor. iv. 15), and more entitled than "ten thousand instructors" to guide them with his counsels. Their local officers were divided among themselves, and he would naturally seek to unite them by his letters; and his interference in discipline was not to execute it himself, but to prompt them to this unpleasant

duty—both to inflict the censure, and to remove it on evidence of repentance in the offender: "Wherefore I beseech you," etc. This surely is not the language of dictation, even, so much as that of paternal interest and affection. There is also in the case at Corinth, as well as in that at Ephesus (1 Tim. i. 20), a trace of the supernatural, belonging only to the apostles, and ministry of gifts in that age of miraculous beginning, delivering over "to Satan for the destruction of the flesh," which, interpreted any way, is hardly intelligible in the ordinary exercise of discipline. Besides, the peculiarity of these cases must be joined with a logical assumption which proves too much, and therefore nothing at all, for the arrogance which takes away from the eldership to an episcopal apostolate the distinctive ordinance of discipline in the process. The argument from these instances would make Paul a primate among the apostles themselves, for he is the only one of record who concerned himself immediately in the practice of discipline. Also, it is reckoned fairly that more than a hundred different churches existed in the time of the apostles, and it is fairly presumed that in these new and crude formations other cases of disorder and offence occurred which in the silence of Scripture must have been handled by the ordinary benches of elders.

Parity in Ordaining to Office.

III. The apostles did not reserve to themselves the power of ordination more than that of discipline. After the ordination of deacons at the beginning of their church-work (Acts vi.), and the ordination of elders in churches of Asia Minor by "Barnabas and Saul" (Acts xiv.), we read no more of ordination performed

by apostles in company. And we do not find on record one instance of an apostle acting as a lone ordainer. Not even in the case of Paul's "dearly-beloved son, Timothy," was he a lone ordainer. When we are pointed to his words in 2 Tim. i. 6 ("Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands"), we cannot accept as certain at all the reference to be to ordination to office (as we have seen in another connection), and not rather to a faith—an extraordinary faith, the faith of miracles, peculiar to that age, and like other gifts of God bestowed at the laying on of hands by a lone apostle: "To another faith, by the same Spirit." 1 Cor. xii. 9. This kind of faith seems to have been given to the family of Timothy in three generations coexisting in the ministry of Paul, as we see in the context—the grandmother, the mother and the son. This gift the receiver is here exhorted to stir up (ἀναζωπυρεῖν) as one does a smouldering fire to a flame; and the apostle adds, as a reason, the nature of this gift: "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power and of love and of a sound mind." The whole congruity of the passage is spoiled by the notion of ordination to office.

Office in the case of Timothy is explicitly declared in 1 Tim. iv. 14: "Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery." Here no function of Paul is apparent, unless it might be as an elder and one of that Presbytery. But the dynamic preposition διὰ takes προφητείας ("by prophecy") instead of the personal action of Paul in the other passage; "by prophecy" instead of "by the putting on of my hands," it is here. According to the predictions which had gone before upon

the child of such a family, he was in due time ordained a presbyter by a Presbytery. According to the high spiritual power conferred on apostles, he next obtained from God a gift which fitted him for the ministry of gifts as well as of orders, and this came at the symbolic putting of the great apostle's hands upon his head. The frivolous effort so often made to shape these two passages together in a construction which makes Paul the ordainer and the Presbytery a mere accompaniment will never satisfy the candid scholar: διὰ ("by") and μετὰ ("with") are familiarly interchangeable in the Greek, we read, and in the New Testament are often changed, for euphony, to express the same thing. Thus, in Acts xv. 4, 12 these two prepositions are used precisely in the same sense, not to mention other places. To say, then, that in the transaction of Timothy's investment the virtue of ordination was from Paul only, in διὰ, and the formal concurrence merely of an eldership in μετὰ, in order to bolster the usage of diocesan episcopacy by a difference of particles, cannot be creditable to the manhood of sacred learning or to good sense.

But if we should allow the modification which a difference between these convertible prepositions might effect on the record of Timothy's ordination, what shall we do with "the presbytery" in this matter of making a bishop and diocesan bishop, that Timothy is claimed to have been made by the hands of Paul? Does prelacy admit of such an accompaniment now in the consecration of a diocesan bishop? Would not all popery and prelacy both revolt from an ordination so performed at present by the hands of inferiors laid upon the head of a superior in rank—hands of working elders on the head of an apostole-bishop—which of course communicate nothing

higher than themselves? No refinement on the prepositions can eliminate the eldership, and other evasions must be sought for to escape the presbyterian ordination of Timothy. The word "presbytery" (πρεσβυτέριον), inasmuch as Peter and John severally called themselves presbyter (elder), must mean here the college of apostles, it is said, rather than the council of presbyters. Yet this word was undoubtedly the old synagogue-name for the bench of elders, and was always used by the apostolic Fathers to denote an eldership meeting, never the apostolic assembly or college. It is also asserted that the Christian Church should be formed on the model of the temple and its hierarchy, and not on the synagogue and its humanly-invented simplicity. How shall these positions be reconciled? For the sake of making Timothy a diocesan bishop will they take for this one occasion a synagogue denomination for the twelve apostles in council, their own Ignatius himself to the contrary notwithstanding? and if the Presbytery in that ordination of Timothy was a council of apostles under a singular name, and the apostle Paul, as they say, was the ordainer alone "by the putting on of my hands," what an attitude it gives to him in the midst of fellow-apostles, making him the archapostle, with a pre-eminence which he resisted in others and disavowed in himself through the whole tenor of his life and writing! Again, if the term rendered "Presbytery" mean office itself, as Calvin once thought and as some Episcopalians of our day have reaffirmed, then either the apostles acted in the capacity of elders in giving the office such a name, or the result of their action was the ordination of an elder, the officer made corresponding to the designation of the office, or the abstract office itself must have had hands to lay on

the living personal incumbent; which, of course, would be senseless. We must, therefore, escape from every dilemma on the obvious import of the phrase by recognizing a body of elders separating Timothy to the ministry of their own order by the laying on of their own hands. They could not invest him with an office higher than their own.

And yet so high was this office of their own reckoned in apostolic times that the first full proceeding in the solemnity of ordination actually separated to its work, at the bidding of the Holy Ghost, "Barnabas and Saul" —the first already in the ministry of gifts, the second already called to be an apostle. Acts xiii. In this transaction the complete pattern of such procedure, even if it were exceptional in being designed for a special missionary-tour, we see the action of a Presbytery, the model way of consecration to office in the Church—fasting, prayer and laying on of hands—without the slightest regard or deference of inferiors to superiors either in rank or in talent, "prophets and teachers," without the name of "bishop" in the number, ordaining, at the call of God's eternal Spirit, the great apostle of the Gentiles.

Parity in Preaching.

IV. There is no gradation among preachers indicated in all the ordinations mentioned in Scripture. Like the ordinance of baptism, ordination to preach was complete and finished once for all when it was rightly solemnized once. Probation of candidates must precede the solemnity, not follow it. The so-called "three orders" in the ministry are essentially but one order. A stepping-stone at the door is no part of the door itself. The deacon's order in preaching is no distinct office with which a can-

didate feels contented to abide "faithful even unto death," any more than license to preach in the way of probation will satisfy the Presbyterian student and his Presbytery that he ought to remain in that capacity, making full proof of his ministry at that degree of inchoation.

The affectation of Judaism after the secular state of it perished began to call the Christian deacons "Levites." These had been servitors, instructors, musicians, etc., in the old economy, and the name, transferred to deacons, naturally suggested similar occupations for the new in the same varieties of character and alternation. Besides, at this time the bishops, though not yet diocesan, were eager to possess the sacerdotal functions which now sought the sympathies of Christianity as a castaway priesthood of the temple. The Levites had always been excluded from priestly performance, though serving it, as ministers of religion, beside the family of Aaron. The Christian deacons, with such a resemblance of historical disability, became the favorites of aspiring bishops—their helps, their messengers, their mouthpiece—without rivalry excited, while ruling elders were ugly obstacles in the way of their progress. It needed only the promotion of deacons to some degree of ministry in the word to bring them above the elders' bench in popular estimation, and so work out of existence that sturdy line of dissent which would continue the primitive simplicity of elder. Thus deaconship was compromised and the original eldership suppressed on the pathway of return to sacerdotalism by men who claimed to be successors of those founders that had called for the election of deacons to "serve tables" in order that commissioned preachers might "give themselves to prayer and the ministry of the word." Oneness of the commission to preach and to baptize had no

number three between the lines to be discovered only when the Supper would be turned to sacrifice, the eldership to priesthood, and the oversight of one flock to lordship over many flocks in the heritage of God.

To say that two of "the seven" originally ordained as deacons—Stephen and Philip—must have been preachers, according to the record of their lives in Scripture, is too much, and therefore nothing, in the argument for making a preacher of the deacon, because these two—and probably the whole number—were preachers before this appointment in the ministry of gifts, without previous ordination at all, as the qualification premised for the seven was "honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom." And the seven themselves are not called "deacons" at all, but "men appointed over this business" to superintend the work of deacons, already in the Church from of old, and needing now to be reconstructed. This was the overtask which the main witnesses for Christ, "whom he named 'apostles,'" were obliged to decline for the stress of public ordinances—prayer and preaching—which were the burden of their testimony. Speaking for men to God and for God to men was the double work of witnessing for Christ that continually engaged the power and wisdom of apostles. Acts vi. 1–6.

Parity in Jurisdiction.

V. Beyond the limits of one parish no one man was authorized in primitive Christianity as a bishop to extend his jurisdiction. Territorial extension, which had a plurality of particular churches included, was governed by representative assemblies only, in all its common concerns of church-work and rule. The minute details of

episcopal duty in the smallest oversight were enough to fill the hands of Gregory Thaumaturgus at the middle of the third century, the miracle of whose pastorate in New Cæsarea, Pontus, consisted in finding but seventeen Christians when he assumed it and in leaving but seventeen pagans there at his death. Early in the second century Ignatius was born, and about the middle of that century wrote to Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna, concerning the duties of a bishop: "Give thyself to prayer without ceasing. Be watchful, possessing a sleepless spirit. Speak to every man separately as God enables thee. Bear the infirmities of all. Let not widows be neglected. Be thou, after the Lord, their protector and friend. Let nothing be done without thy consent. Let your assembling together be of frequent occurrence; seek after all by name. Do not despise either male or female slaves, yet neither let them be puffed up with conceit, but rather let them submit themselves the more for the glory of God, that they may obtain from God a better liberty. Let them not wish to be set free at the public expense, that they be not found slaves to their own desires." Many similar citations might be made from apostolic Fathers which manifestly imply the relation of a bishop to the particular charge of a pastor's life in one parish only, and the qualifications for such a life laid down in Paul's directions to Timothy. Not a line or a word in all their literature implies the suffragan relation of any bishop to another bishop; and the quotations above are taken purposely from Ignatius, who is the oracle of that age to modern prelacy. In the concluding paragraph of that letter to Polycarp he asks him to write similar letters to "the adjacent churches," because he, Ignatius, was unable to do it on account of

being hurried "suddenly to sail" away from his own church. These incidental topics and allusions evidently reveal the fact that the parochial bishop was not subject to a diocesan overseer in the second century, though in equal correspondence with other bishops for mutual encouragement and counsel.

But toward the end of the same century historians find the leaven of ambition working out upon the whole lump from the strong and rich churches in large centres of population where the bishops of single parishes, when their people began to colonize and create other parishes, followed them with reluctant leave or propelling consent in order to secure a patronage over them and bind them to the mother-church as chapels of ease; and, if no longer dependent upon her in the way of support, leaning upon her with reverence and accepting still the oversight of her bishop even in the subjection, to some extent, of their new and probably younger bishops they had chosen. The subordination of newer churches in the process of Church extension became a measure of peace and unity in this way, and so reconciled the most watchful and devoted men of the generations, then passing through persecutions without and heresies within, to any form of expediency that seemed to compact the visible Church and make her frontage of militancy "fair as the moon, and clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners."

Developed in this way through turbulent times in the world, the Christian Church became a power on earth and attracted the eye of imperial ambition itself, which hitherto had been hostile. A political organization was now discovered as practicable among the spiritual hosts which were increasing, harmless, and yet invincible.

How far the sagacity of Constantine, thus informed, may have led to his conversion and made the halo of that cross which he was said to have seen in the heavens we need not conjecture in this connection. It is enough to know that in the establishment of Christianity by his power he consigned to her synods the internal and reserved to himself the external construction of the Christian Church. This was modeled after the fashion of his empire, and of course with gradations of rank, aristocratic inequality, bishop over bishop, synod over synod, with a last resort to his imperial chamber to ratify every constitution and confirm every decision, both external and internal. Even the vocabulary of State, army and publican was now transfused into the language of apostolical religion, and hence "diocese" became the designation of that larger field in which a parish was made a smaller and subordinate part by the decree of an emperor, the bishops of particular churches being already, as we have seen, too well prepared, and even eager, in the dominant cities, to accept this modification.

The dissenters of that age were thus constrained by civil despotism and ecclesiastical encroachment combined. The country bishops or pastors—called *chor-episcopi*—resisted and were repressed by councils made up of prelates alone. The ruling elders—always an obstacle to the ambition of metropolitan pastors—were excluded from councils, and even, at length, from their benches in the Christian synagogue, and the deacons, more tractable, were uplifted over elders, graded in their own rank and made preachers—all but the newly-made subdeacon. Human and not divine, imperial and not republican, forceful and not persuasive, despotic and not free, is the origin of diocese in the Church of Christ,

and such a secular spread of spiritual jurisdiction naturally and soon led to intolerance and persecution. All the pretensions to unity of external organization—which was the plausible pretext of the beginning—were unmasked so much by quarrels among diocesans in the Middle Ages, who lived and fought with one another like feudal barons, that a wonder in Church history is how such a perversion of bishopries could have passed into any branch of the Protestant Church. No sanction from canonical scripture could ever be found or ever attempted fairly. As well might we go to the Bible for the whole pile of gradation made by Constantine upon his platform, beginning with himself as the head—patriarchs, exarchs, metropolitans, archbishops, and bishops diocesan, all alike the creation of his profane omnipotence.

About a thousand years before the great Reformation some apocryphal transcriber had contrived surreptitiously to insert two postscripts in the sacred canon apparently to this very intent, that the subsequent Bibles might appear to give apostolical sanction to this diocesan episcopacy. One of these we see at the end of the Second Epistle to Timothy and the other at the end of Titus, the one reading thus of Timothy: "Ordained the first bishop of the church of the Ephesians;" the other of Titus: "Ordained the first bishop of the church of the Cretians." With eminent candor as well as learning the recent Revision of the New Testament, begun and finished under the auspices of English and American scholars of high official standing in the respective churches, ignores the postscripts at length and utterly expunges them, but the presumption that Timothy and Titus had each a diocese by appointment of

the apostles yet lingers behind and calls for continued review.

(1) Timothy was an evangelist expressly so called (2 Tim. iv. 5)—Titus also, though not so directly styled in the text of inspiration. His work to which he was appointed was the same precisely as that of Timothy, and, like him, he is called "my own son" by the apostle Paul, and also "my partner and fellow-helper." 2 Cor. viii. 23. Evangelists were also regarded as next to the apostles, being their companions, deputies, helpers, agents; and it was no more compatible with their vocation to become bishops of any degree with a fixed local superintendency than with that of Paul himself. They were always actually travelling or making arrangements for travel and change. Thus, in these very same documents where they have been so artfully countersigned as bishops we have the plainest internal evidence that they were not such. Although at the beginning of the letters to Timothy the apostle wrote, "As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia," etc., he writes at the end, "Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me;" "Take Mark, and bring him with thee; for he is profitable to me for the ministry;" "The cloke that I left at Troas with Carpus, when thou comest, bring with thee, and the books, but especially the parchments." Surely these are not congruous injunctions to be laid upon a bishop of paramount authority and permanent abode at Ephesus. Similar exactly is the correspondence with Titus. At the beginning we read, "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee." At the end we read, "Be diligent

to come unto me to Nicopolis; for I have determined there to winter;" "Bring Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their journey diligently, that nothing be wanting unto them." On the whole face of the pastoral Epistles we have strongly marked the distinct enumeration of ascension-gifts in Eph. iv. 11: "He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers." Pastors are identical with bishops in the New-Testament sense, and therefore bishops are different and distinct from evangelists alike in the name and in the narratives of New-Testament history, where no bishop over bishop is ever even hinted at.

(2) Beyond the supplementary help rendered to the apostle—which, of course, must be extraordinary—there is nothing special in the functions of those evangelists that is at all above the prerogatives of a pastor in one particular church, the parochial bishop. They are commissioned to ordain elders, and that with the most careful discrimination of the proper qualifications which indicate a prior call of God to the office; and these elders are declared to be the same as bishops in the rank of office, the two designations being always and undoubtedly convertible in Holy Scripture. These elders or bishops thus inducted are in turn authorized to select and ordain others like themselves, the rule of transmission being so clearly given (2 Tim. ii. 2) to commit what had been heard from the apostle or his deputies to "faithful men who would be able to teach others also." To say that these evangelists, in transmitting office on such a level, were individual men, and therefore not a Presbytery or elders in so acting, but diocesan bishops, no matter by what name we call them,

because a lone individual officiating so means, of course, a superiority of rank to the elders made by his hand, is the logical vice of begging the question to which our prelatic brethren seem to be so much addicted. We deny the premise that any officer is to be considered superior to another merely because he is alone at his duty; we deny that the power of ordination must be reposed in a bishop of higher grade than the bishop or elder invested by his hands. We affirm that the ordainer and the ordained are equal to each other, and that the ordaining elder may be alone as a committee and representative of his Presbytery, either at home or abroad, in home or foreign missionary fields, just as Timothy and Titus were each alone as charged by the apostle Paul. Nothing is more familiar in the solemnity of ordination by a Presbytery than the charge to an individual to be faithful in doing what he can do only as one of a plurality or a quorum individualized in the special duties of a Presbytery as well as in the common and separate duties of the pastor or evangelist.

(3) The argument for a superior grade of office in the ordainer because he was alone at Ephesus and at Crete in exercising the function is also inconsistent with another averment—that elders existed at both these places before the mission of Timothy to one and of Titus to the other. On this presumption it is argued against us that Presbyteries or elders must have been superseded or set aside by the advent of Timothy and Titus respectively to perform ordinations alone, and therefore the method of diocesan episcopacy must have been inaugurated there and then. Here, again, is the *petitio principii* exemplified in mere assertion. On the inspection of those pastoral Epistles there is no evidence that

either of the evangelists acted alone in ordaining or that any organizations had been previously made in the cities of Crete; and if there had been, the disorders existing and the dangers impending among the crude beginnings and the inexperienced officers of either or both those fields required the visitation of an apostle or his legate to set in order things which were wanting and leave explicit and exact instructions to guide the people and their elders in doctrine, usage, election and government alike. The formative state of a social compact, civil or sacred, needs outside and extraordinary influence to make it normal.

(4) In order to widen the jurisdiction and to elevate the rank of bishop over bishop, the advocates of prelacy have contrived a singular dilemma for themselves in the chronology of Ephesus. The First Epistle to Timothy, which contains most of the proper directions for episcopal oversight, must have been written either before or after the memorable interview of Paul himself with the elders of Ephesus mentioned in Acts xx. 28. If before, and the evangelist was then abiding at Ephesus as an overseer of bishops, why does not the apostle refer them to the diocesan already set over them for the regulation of elders and everything else pertaining to pastoral duty and responsibility? Why does he say, without mention of Timothy at all, whom he had settled there to say the same things, "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know, that after my departing, shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock"? Had their diocesan become already incapable or unfaithful or non-resident

in two years or less after his consecration, and he a spiritual son of Paul, possessing the miraculous faith of the age at the putting on of the apostle's own hands? Or, taking the later date, after this meeting of the elders with Paul at Miletus, we resort to the subsequent Epistle of Paul to the Ephesians themselves, that sublimest of sacred letters, replete with the mystery and majesty of the gospel Church, and yet abounding with instructions of the pastoral care, minutely and familiarly given as a superior bishop could write, and yet no word of Timothy being there as a bishop of any sort and at any time. Tychicus, and not Timothy, has the recommendation at the close: "A beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, shall make known to you all things, whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that ye might know our affairs, and that he might comfort your hearts." On one and either horn of this dilemma must hang the claim of prelacy, for the itinerating evangelism of Timothy could not possibly be impaled by either.

CHAPTER XI.

RULING ELDERS.

THESE are the aboriginal elders of the Church, continued through all dispensations. They existed before Moses, with patriarchal descent, and were called into the service of religion before its revelation was penned, or "the God of Abraham" would not have said to Moses, "Go and gather the elders of Israel together;" "And thou shalt come, thou and the elders of Israel, unto the king of Egypt, and ye shall say unto him, The Lord God of the Hebrews hath met with us," etc. These commissioners of the Most High were also representatives of the people, for another familiar designation is "elders of the people." And yet, lest their close identification with the represented should ever lead the people to regard them as laical, and not official in connection with Moses, and this great prophet should be left without an order of special organization to hold up his hands in the burden of that ministry to which he was called, the Almighty deigned to charter a selection of that eldership to help him: "And the Lord said unto Moses, Gather unto me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom thou knowest to be the elders of the people and officers over them: and bring them unto the tabernacle of the congregation, that they may stand there with thee. And I will come down and talk with

thee there; and I will take of the spirit which is upon thee, and will put it upon them; and they shall bear the burden of the people with thee, that thou bear it not thyself alone." Num. i. 16, 17. Thus "the church in the wilderness" had ruling elders, provided by divine appointment, to counsel and encourage their missionary-leader; and these are called by inspiration "officers," and not "laymen," and imbued with the same spirit as Moses himself.

This divine ordination has never been revoked. When the Hebrew pilgrimage was ended and the settlements in Canaan were completed, "elders of the city" and "elders of every city" composed the main authority of government, in local distribution as well as national Sanhedrin, and of course that theocratic constitution of the Old-Testament people would have elders to rule in the ecclesia as well as in the municipality—the conventicle of moral and religious instruction as well as the bench of justice at the gate. A plurality of ruling elders in session became the germ of organism for assemblies of revealed religion under all circumstances of the nation —under judges, under kings, in empire and in captivity. No political revolution even where Church and State were united, no change of dynasty, no loss of temple and altar, no lapse of covenant or decadence of piety, could abolish this one feature of eldership in the ancient Church. It waited intact for the redemption of Israel, when a greater than Moses would come to gather elders, to be joined with him and share his spirit in the mission of his ministry.

Ruling and teaching are inseparable from each other in some proportion. The ruler, judicial or executive, must explain to some extent the law which is applied

with authority; the teacher must govern to some degree the attention, decorum and docility with which instruction is received. The officer must be interpreter of his own functions, to himself and others; the instructor must exercise the rules of logic and common sense by which men are convinced and persuaded, or he is unworthy of the name. Men of age and of experience denoted in the name of elder, senior, presbyter, English, Latin or Greek, have in all ages been regarded as ordinarily fittest for both ruling and teaching; and consequently the distinction possible to be made among elders in the official sense must be a difference of proportion in these constituent elements of qualification—that is, endowment and education of speech will make one elder a teacher chiefly; and good sense, with becoming tact, without comparative learning, will make another chiefly a ruler; and thus in every age the generic elders naturally divide, the distinction being made more or less apparent according to circumstances and to change of dispensation.

In Old-Testament times, when Levites were distributed in forty-eight cities through all the tribes for the purposes of common education, and prophets traversed the land with the spirit and demonstration of natural and supernatural gifts, the province of elders in the Church was mainly ruling in the direction of exercises, of reading and speaking and of administering discipline. In the absence of stated supply, Levite, prophet or gifted passenger whom they could trust in addressing the people, the elders would designate one of themselves, with consent of the congregation, to conduct the ordinances of worship and instruction. It was in accordance with these traditions that our

Lord and his disciples were everywhere so freely admitted to the teacher's desk in the synagogues. It was in the tacit approval of such regulations of order and continuance of the same in furtherance of the gospel that the New Testament was knit to the Old in form, and that elderships were virtually ordained for ever to govern the Church of Christ.

While apostles were in the field, and the accompanying ministry of gifts, without ordination by man, elders seemed to be engaged in ruling only. Being a constituent portion of the first general council at Jerusalem (Acts xv.), they participated in deliberation and decision without prominence in speaking and debate, though effective in voting and zealous in acting harmoniously with the great witnesses and the gifted "brethren," the apostolical associates and assistants going "to and fro" with the gospel in those days. The settled officers in organized churches called "bishops and deacons"—overseers and servants—were, as of old, guiding and guarding their flocks respectively against imposition, meanwhile, discriminating true missionaries from false in procuring itinerant supply for their "synagogue," and conducting divine service by one or more of the elders when there was no Pentecostal preacher at hand.

Some fourteen years after the general assembly at Jerusalem—in which the elders appeared to be all ruling in character—the apostle Paul, writing to Timothy, said the elder should be "apt to teach," repeating the same term when he wrote the Second Epistle to Timothy, a year later. Ch. ii. 24. In both places it is generical in sense, meaning both public and private teaching, and either active or passive, teaching or teachable, in the etymon and the context, as we shall see

again. This predicate of the bishop or elder is therefore obviously susceptible of distinction in kind as well as in the name itself given to the officer, private, social, public and judicial teaching all included.

Circumstances and events, as well as words, will make logical distinctions. When the elders were at length left alone to teach as the supernatural endowments and calling were withdrawn partially or altogether, and the supervening commission to preach and baptize rested on the benches of eldership, the traditional proportion between teaching and ruling must of course become changed: to answer the distinction of heralds and judges now devolved, of necessity, upon eldership economy. "Who will go for us?" and "Who will stay with us" in preaching the gospel of this kingdom? must have been the great questions of that primordial crisis in every congregation of believers. All the elders in the plurality of each particular church would not be qualified, nor desire, to become ministers of the word, and would feel it their duty and calling to abide as rulers in the church and teachers in the family apart. And, on the other hand, one or more of the elders existing or of the people desiring to be elders, being inwardly moved by the Spirit and externally recognized as apt and blameless, would be designated for this ministry by the other elders and by consent of the people.*

Thus the distinction between teaching and ruling elders would naturally begin to be made, and the emphasis of it would be increased apace with the difference of occupation and diligence therein of the preacher, being given to it "wholly," and his "profit-

* Jerome, Ep. 146, "Ad Evang.," affirms that the elders elected the bishop from their own bench at Alexandria until the year 265.

ing" more and more appearing to all men. Though the same episcopate, or oversight, remained common to the whole bench of elders, the title "bishop" would be given especially to the teaching elder, whose whole time and ability must be given to its duties. The name, the qualifications and the total consecration exonerating him from the ordinary obligation to live by the work of his own hands must make distinction enough to require another ordination to signalize the new functions with which a standing ministry is clothed as apostles leave the field to succeeding elders. The distinction, as it widens, will certainly make another class of elders, entitled to a distinct ordination, but never so as to supersede and abolish the residuary portion of eldership or deprive them of the name. On the contrary, it enhances the importance of this order as auxiliary and indispensable in proportion to the advancement and the success of teaching elders.

Deference to the word of God should ask no more of the Scriptures than this inferential *exposé* of facts implied in the revelation expressly given to justify the distinction made by Presbytery among the elders that compose it. The fair presumption of common sense and the deduction of sound reason from premises of inspiration are only stimulated to legitimate conjecture in filling up the outline and formulating the induction by hints in the Bible for the exercise of our manhood. "Light shining in a dark place" need not be a lantern in the hand for searching narrowly every step we take on lines of radiation which point us to the object we should attain, and which start us in the right direction. We have not one ray for prelacy in the New Testament, either to begin at or to end with. Hitching

its line back upon the shadows of priesthood and upon three orders in temple-service of old, it has only darkness and silence in passing by our Lord and his disciples where they went to church, and added to the church daily of the saved, and ordained elders in every new church that was organized by their ministry. But the constituents of Presbytery—teaching and ruling in different proportion, making distinction of classes by the force of circumstances, beginning at the exodus from Egypt by divine appointment, and never ceasiug on the luminous track of sacred history—met the recognition of Christ and his apostles most conspicuously at "the fulness of time." Receiving new direction and final instruction from inspired apostles, they are necessarily distinguished again for all time, as at the first, into classes for the work of the ministry and the government of the Church.

Warrant for the Distinct Office.

1. In prescription, time is warrant of title, and the legation of Moses, in which ruling elders of Israel were made a distinct order of diplomatic agents at the court of Pharaoh and a special body of counsellors to assist the great prophet through all the perplexities and discouragements of his charge, may surely be considered antiquity enough to establish a title—especially so when it is revealed that they had the office before that appointment. And the name is indefinitely historical—so much that the memory of man "runneth not to the contrary." Remote as the patriarchal form, the first one visible, and widely as terms of respect for constituted authority and conventional dignity among men, can be traced in the language of any people, we find the notions of elder

and ruler, elder and teacher, elder and representative, combined with, and yet distinguished from, each other.

When we come to the advent of our Lord, we find the prescription of elders in office universally respected, and these familiarly known as rulers, chiefly judicial, and that in the synagogue. Other offices originated then for the teaching of all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. A precursor in the desert preaching repentance, threescore and ten evangelists throughout Judea to herald the coming of Jesus in person, a ministry of gifts when the Spirit of power descended to speak with tongues and to prophesy, and, above all, the twelve apostles, witnesses and preachers everywhere they could go, from Jerusalem to Babylon and from Babylon to Rome, —the origin, occasion and calling of all these ministers of the word are signalized in sacred history, and for the most part minutely recorded; but not a word is written about the origin of elders, so expressly mentioned of old, and the office came to be noticed now only when called for the organization of churches anew. Two things are obviously indicated by this omission—the familiar descent of these from indefinite antiquity needing no notice of origin again, and their time-honored exercise, at and after the advent, in directing "governments" and "discerning of spirits." As representatives of the people when extraordinary preachers withdrew from the Church, the elders in her "ministry of orders" received the behest of the great commission to teach, baptize and disciple men throughout all the world.

2. The plurality of elders ordained in every church (Acts xiv. 23) evinces a variety in functions of this office and its exercise enough to divide the number and make a classific distinction among them, else the mis-

sionary spirit of that age would condemn the organism for superfluity and waste of provision. Many of the earliest Christian churches were very small at the beginning—even fewer in membership than was the old synagogue minimum of ten persons, including this plurality of elders. We read among the postapostolic Fathers the figures 17, 12 or 8 in the organization at first; and if all the elders ordained are to be considered as one class only of authorized teachers, can it be credible that two or more ministers of the gospel were assigned to the care of seventeen souls, when the harvest was so great and the laborers few, millions perishing in pagan darkness and the ministry called to be expansive as the light of day? "But I say have they not heard? Yes, verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words to the end of the world." If a church in our day, ten times the number, should engross a plurality of preachers for their own exclusive use, what would be thought of their missionary spirit in such a selfish concentration of available force? The New-Testament eldership can be plural consistently in each particular church only upon the hypothesis of a synagogue bench continued of local officers ordained as ruling elders in the exercise of a spiritual oversight.

3. Ruling officially is more than one side of the generic elder in Scripture. It is made a whole character, of distinct office, in that profusion of distinctions with which the Christian era began its ordinations. Supernatural and transient as many of them were, they all converged in one great principle of organization—that a gift from God in the endowment by his Spirit is the foundation of office in the Church and qualifying fitness to exercise it. When the gift is withdrawn, the office

will cease, in fair exegesis of the warrant. When the gift abides, the office it creates may be discriminated easily as permanent, and nothing is more apparent in observation than the perpetuity of "ruling well" in the Church through all her generations which are not of the apostasy. Take up the catalogues of primitive bestowment which have mingled the transient and the permanent together—such as Rom. xii. 6–8 and 1 Cor. xii. 28—and subtract the detail of gifts confessedly marvellous and transient; the remainder contains, "he that ruleth with diligence" in the former, and "governments" in the latter passage, indicating alike the character of a distinct office in the Church for all time. The first enumeration begins with the preamble, "Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us;" the second begins with the familiar words of divine institution, "God hath set some in the church, first;" etc., the recital making "governments" a character of office quite as distinctly as "teachers" or "apostles" themselves. Distinction is made of these characters one from another sharply as language can make it by adversative particles, ordinal enumeration and challenging interrogatories in recapitulation: "Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers?" etc.; and, though it is not said, "are all governments?" the reason is that governments, to some extent, are included in all teaching offices, while teaching is not included to the same extent in governments.

While we notice the transient character of many primitive offices when "workers of miracles" were in the field, we must not conclude that no trace of these remained upon the Church after the gifts on which they were founded were withdrawn. Each office in the min-

istry of orders inherited enrichment with principles of which they were indicative, and the permanent realized as legacy much importance from the typical use of the miraculous in the effusion of Pentecost. For example, the office of teaching elder groups in its province "diversities of tongues," "helps," interpretation of prophecy, and all the varieties of utterance imported in "prophesying;" and the longer it continues in the world, the more conspicuous become these proper accomplishments of the preacher. The ruling elder also inherits from that primitive profusion "governments" in the original sense of skilful direction, "discerning of spirits" in the wise discrimination of false teachers who would impose upon the flock over which they are made overseers; and the deacon shares in such inheritance "gifts of healings," "giving with simplicity," "shewing mercy with cheerfulness."

These groups of typical realization add immensely to the import of our permanent offices in the Church, and in proportion to the increase of importance must be also the conspicuity of our threefold distinction among them. The cincture of assimilated functions on each standing column of our temple not only increases the beauty of adornment and the proportion of weight respectively, but challenges comparison also, and signalizes difference of entablature and wreathing which will make intelligent observers appreciate distinction as well as consistent utility in the structure.

4. Distinction between the teaching and the ruling elder is expressed in 1 Tim. v. 17: "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially they who labor in the word and doctrine." That profound theologian and learned exegete of the seventeenth cen-

tury Dr. John Owen, though not a Presbyterian, thus expresses his interpretation of our proof-texts: "Elders not called to teach ordinarily, or administer the sacraments, but to assist and help in the rule and government of the Church, are mentioned in the Scripture, Rom. xii. 8; 1 Cor. xii. 28; 1 Tim. v. 17."* Dr. Whitaker, of the same century, regius professor of divinity at Cambridge, said, "If all that rule well be worthy of double honor, especially they that labor in the word and doctrine, it is plain there be some who did not so labor, for if all had been of this description the meaning would have been absurd; but the word 'especially' points out a difference. If I should say that all who study well at the university are worthy of double honor, especially they that labor at the study of theology, I mean that all do not apply themselves to the study of theology, or I speak nonsense. Wherefore I confess that to be the most genuine sense according to which pastors and teachers are distinguished from those who only governed." With him, Archbishop Ussher, Dr. Lightfoot, Dr. Whitby, Archbishop Potter, Bishop Burnet, Dr. Dodwell, and others too numerous to be mentioned, agreed on the side of prelacy; and on the other side—the Independent and Congregational—Drs. Doddridge and Dwight, and Dr. Ladd of this generation, and many others, agree with Dr. Owen substantially as above cited; to which might be added pungent expressions of Dr. Owen elsewhere on the attempted evasions of this main scriptural proof.

When a passage is faithfully rendered as this one is, the interpretation of common sense is best; and we affirm that no unprejudiced reader would hesitate to

* Owen's *Works*, vol. xix. p. 535.

say that here are indicated two classes of elders in the Christian Church—one ordained to rule, and the other to rule and to teach. If all elders of the New Testament are alike in being preachers, and must, of course, be rulers also in the Church, how could there be consistency in giving double honor for half duty, and still more abundant honor for the other half of duty—double honor to this side, and especially to the other side, of the same office? Surely this looks like frivolity of exegesis. As it is hard to poll the verdict of common sense, however, let us count a few plausibilities of the opposite opinion. Dr. Wardlaw, in his keen review of Dr. King on the office of ruling elder, lays down the premises on which we are willing to risk the argument on this notable text. "According to what may be called invariable usage," says he, "it must be understood as representing those who are described in the latter part of the verse as comprehended in the more general description of the former—not as a distinct class of persons, but a select portion of the same class, distinguished by a specified particularity." Precisely so, excepting the gratuitous negative expressed by Dr. Wardlaw. All the elders mentioned in the verse are indeed the general class, and do comprehend those who "labor in the word and doctrine" as a "specified particularity." All elders were at first ordained as rulers, and the specified particularity which supervened upon them by apostolical direction to minister as teachers also in word and in doctrine necessarily distinguished and with diverse culture more and more into another class of elders those who were best qualified and deputed by their brethren, with suffrage of the people. We need not dispute about a word—"class"—when historical facts make a distinc-

tion and the passage bears upon its face the nature of this difference.

It is worthy of notice in this connection that Congregational churchmen of New England, in departing from the Cambridge platform, which recognized the ruling elder as a distinct office, have glossed our Authorized Version of the text (1 Tim. v. 17) in this way: "*Especially, they laboring in word and doctrine;* or in this way: *Especially as they labor in word and doctrine;* which gives essentially a new turn to the passage."* Of course Dr. Wardlaw's "select portion of the same class" may be dispensed with on this variety of interpretation, for the intensive adverb "especially" is thus applied to all the elders indicated in the text. Such a version also dispenses with the demonstrative force of the pronoun "they" (*οἱ*), which the recent Revision of the New Testament restores and increases properly by substituting "those" for "they." It also reduces the original adverb (*μάλιστα*, "especially") from the superlative to the positive degree, meaning "much" instead of "more" or "most." In these two degrees it is invariably *distinctive* as well as *intensive* in the Holy Scriptures; and, as this one word is so often alleged to be the pivotal point for a warrant to the ruling elder's office, we should, to justify our Westminster position, patiently collate all the passages in which it is used.

The first three instances in the acts of Paul (Acts xx. 38; xxv. 26; xxvi. 3) may be grouped together as the slightest of all in making distinction, and yet it appears to any attention of reading: "Sorrowing most of all (*μάλιστα*) for the words which he spake, that they should see his face no more." Here the utterance of a final de-

* Prof. Thomas C. Upham.

parture is a distinct as well as chief cause of their sorrow. "Specially (*μάλιστα*) before thee, O King Agrippa," distinguishes Agrippa from "Festus, the chief captains and principal men of the city." And it expresses distinction again when he compliments Agrippa for being best qualified to judge: "Expert in all customs and questions which are among the Jews." Gal. vi. 10: "Let us do good unto all men, *especially* unto them who are of the household of faith;" Phil. iv. 22: "All the saints salute you, chiefly (*μάλιστα*) they that are of Cæsar's household;" 1 Tim. iv. 10: "Who is the Saviour of all men, *specially* of those that believe;" 1 Tim. v. 8: "But if any provide not for his own, and *specially* for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel;" 2 Tim. iv. 13: "And the books, but *especially* the parchments;" Tit. i. 10: "For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, *specially* they of the circumcision;" Philem. 16: "A brother beloved, *specially* to me,"—thus far Paul; and now one citation more, 2 Pet. ii. 10: "But chiefly (*μάλιστα*) them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government." Here the apostle evidently distinguishes the debauched from the unjust in the certainty of punishment awaiting "the unjust" in the day of judgment. Such is the exhaustive collation of uses for this term. And not once is it used intensively without suggesting distinction of some sort. Even without the adversative particle (*δέ*) in the original, it signifies distinction, and this always a more special category than the premises first affirmed or denied. And this answers precisely to the specialty of a teaching eldership devolved on the common bench of rulers when extraordinary teachers, commissioned without ordination and inspired, were

about to leave the ministry of orders fairly adjusted for all time to follow.

Other theories of the distinction, admitting it to be somehow couched in this crucial text, should be noticed briefly in our deference to the opinions of worthy men. It cannot be a distinction between rulers in a general sense who are Christian laymen, and ministers, who, as Christian teachers, must exercise ruling in the Church only; for the context, both before and after, confines the application of both phrases to church-officers alone, and the elders that rule well, as we have seen, must include in its generic sense the teachers who are also elders honored specially for their labor in the word. Besides, the word προεστῶτες, in its participial form, is used in 1 Thess. 5. 12 for officers "which are over you in the Lord." It cannot be that these "elders who rule well" are deacons, for such are uniformly represented as servants in the church. Nor can it be that they are the aged and worn-out preachers of the word, for then the double honor should be "especially" rendered to these, and not to those who have not yet made full proof of their ministry and come so near finishing their course and reaching their crown. Nor can it be that they are the local and settled ministers of a particular church, while those who "labor in the word and doctrine" are the itinerant preachers of the age distinguished for more abounding, exposed and self-consecrated service, for travelling preachers are nowhere in Scripture called "elders," and seem to have all passed away with the exit of apostles and the ministry of gifts. And such a gloss would spoil the logic of this text, in which a general class of elders in the first part comprehends, with "specialty" prefixed, a select portion of itself in the second part of the

sentence. Besides, both designations are applied in 1 Thess. v. 12 to the ordinary and settled officers of each church. Nor can the distinction be between ordinary ministers of the word and those who labor with extraordinary zeal and faithfulness, for that would require invidious embarrassment of the people called to make the discrimination, and would occasion partisan strife and animosity among them. And such a gloss would spoil the rhetoric of the text with a false antithesis. This would be made by putting an adverb, *καλῶς*, in the first clause, against *κοπιῶντες*, a participle, in the second, whereas the true antithesis in words must be made by putting those of the same class in grammar against each other. Besides, this one word *κοπιῶντες*, "who labor," expresses the ordinary toil of a pastor in the particular church (1 Thess. v. 12); and when the apostle would express abounding and extraordinary labor, he has additional words for the diction—*πολλά* or *περισσότερον* or *μόχθος*. (See Rom. xvi. 12; 2 Cor. xi. 27; 1 Thess. ii. 9; 2 Thess. iii. 8.)

Another objection to the force of this proof-text for a distinction made among the presbyter-bishops of the Bible is from the context: "For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And the laborer is worthy of his hire." It is alleged, accordingly, that the word *τιμῆς*, in the text translated "honor," means "hire" or "wages"—the stipend given to ministers of the word, and not to ruling elders. But we may answer that the translation we have is better than the criticism, being the literal rendering of the word, and according to the ancient translations as well as to the recent Revision, and also expressing better the main drift of the context, the

principle of rewarding faithful service in office with revenue or with money, or with both. We may also observe that the omission of salary to a ruling elder cannot alter the warrant of his office, any more than the Council of Carthage in 398 altered the warrant for a standing ministry by ordaining that all preachers should work at some honest trade, and yet not fail of their ecclesiastical dues. But there is in this omission of pay to ruling elders a peculiar suggestion honorable to this important office—that such elders are made more exactly representatives of the people over whom they exercise a spiritual oversight in being practically identified with them as they support themselves by the pursuits of industrial life, so as to know them more intimately and be known by them in the sympathies of fellow-feeling and in the effective influence of a good example in the practice of wisdom, economy, justice, moderation and charity. Yet, as a matter of fact, the ruling elders of our system are not without the *honorarium* of pecuniary recompense to some extent, when their expenses incurred as representatives in the higher judicatories of the Church are actually paid out of a common treasury by a standing order of the Church. But now, again, the objector claims too much for himself on the hypothesis of homogeneous eldership in making all New-Testament elders to be preachers. On that supposition this "double" or abundant stipend would be enjoined for ruling only—not half the deserts of a faithful pastor. Double pay for half work, or less!

Another interpretation to be noticed makes the distinction acknowledged in the passage to be entirely among teaching elders in the way of assigning double honor to those who preside well over assemblies of the

Church at any grade in original or appellate jurisdiction, with either executive or judicial ability—men of skill in the management of affairs, temporal, spiritual or disciplinary, characterized by good sense and firm decision; and, on the other side, more especially when the same persons unite consecration and hard labor in preaching the gospel with such ruling tact in practical influence over men. This exegesis, derived from the commentary of Dr. James MacKnight on the Epistles—over one hundred years old—is too much of private interpretation as applied by him to the presidency of churches in the perilous times of church formation which followed soon after the departure of both Paul and Timothy. Before the new organizations could be normally settled the presbyter-bishop was everything both of ruling and of teaching for a time. Like our home missionaries on the frontier settlements, he had every concern in his hands, both material and spiritual, looking for houses to be hired or built for chapel use, and for men who would be fit for elders or deacons to help him in ministering, and, withal, exposed to persecutions which required supreme prudence in the management of any Christian trust.

But such were exceptional times, and such were exceptional προεστῶτες. We apprehend the apostle in this direction designed the conditions of a permanent and normal organization for all time; and if so, the presidency implied in this term must be reduced to the simple moderatorship in our assemblies of elders, which consists only in collecting and announcing the will of the meeting over which an elder presides. Yet such a sense is too feeble for this word. The moderator is not a ruler in any proper judicial sense; or if he be, and

the term καλῶς ("well") be considered as inviting the people to judge who it is that rules well and better and best among the elders in order to proportion equitably his reward and make it *doubly* abundant, while others get little or none, the injunction in the text becomes invidious, setting the people over the elders and sowing discord, envy and mischievous rivalry as tares among the wheat sown by labor in word and in doctrine. Besides, it would devolve an impossible discrimination for any people to exercise—balancing merits among ministers in order to adjust the recompense aright, and this with a refinement of appreciation or of blame which few, even ministers of the word, are ever competent to exercise. It is a familiar observation to this day that many of the best preachers, and the most admired and sought after by the people, are in Presbytery innocent as children, and more silent in their seats, feeling and confessing themselves incompetent for the business of ruling or presiding in the assemblies. And, still more, the devoted missionary, at home or abroad, who goes far hence to "labor in word and doctrine" without as yet any particular church to be ruled in his charge, must be excluded from the "especially," and, indeed, from the "double honor" in the first clause also, because he has not rule and eloquence mixed together in his qualifications, and so mingled that the people may see how to separate such qualities in the same man and to assign his proper share in the award.

Embarrassments like these must attend all explanations of this text which reject the distinct office of ruling elder in the first clause, and the equally distinct office of teaching elder in the second clause, which does unite both ruling and public teaching in the same man.

We cannot reduce the injunction upon the people it contains to practical application without forcing upon them impracticable judgment delicate as it is difficult and maybe mischievous as it is incompetent. When they choose men like themselves in the ordinary engagements of business life to be their immediate representatives on the elders' bench, there is a common ground of sympathy and intuitive appreciation of character which enable them to discern the "well"-done duty of those who are over them in the Lord in the exercise of a delegated authority; and when they would esteem them highly for their works' sake, such esteem is awarded "especially" to the elder or elders over them who combine a righteous *régime* with the sublime commission to preach the gospel and labor among them in word and in doctrine.

Vitringa, whose treatise on the ancient synagogue as continued in form by the Christian church is the most complete and exhaustive to be found in any language, differs from the main body of the Reformed in the interpretation of this important text, alleging that all elders were made teaching elders alike, and that the distinction made here is only between teachers who attended to ruling chiefly and those who, besides ruling, labored in word and doctrine as pastors or evangelists. In the first and more general class he would comprehend all doctors, professors, tutors and schoolmasters ordained to the ministry of the gospel, and yet turned aside or detained in the miscellaneous business of teaching or anything else than "laboring in the word and doctrine." These would have their place in the Presbytery or eldership of any grade, and should be supported well as they ruled well; and such support should be rendered especially to those who gave them-

selves wholly to the duty of preaching as well as to that of ruling. In this kind of gloss Vitringa has had a following to this day, and yet we need but few words to show that it is untenable.

(1) His elders that "rule well" are not fairly or more immediately "representatives of the people," as compared even with preaching elders at home or abroad.

(2) He was misled by a name which he himself gave the elders, whom we call representatives of the people. He begins and continues throughout his argument to call them laymen—"lay-elders," a title ignored by the Westminster Assembly and by every other intelligent writer who has carefully studied the subject.

(3) He overlooked entirely the broad interpretation of the phrase "apt to teach," confining it to the ordained preachers of the word, whilst both in the original and in the Version it may be generalized more than even the word "elder" itself, and applied either to public or to private teaching, either by laymen or by clergymen, and taken in either an active or a passive sense.

(4) The glomeration of teachers he puts in the first and more general class of elders had no existence when the apostle wrote the words of that text for Timothy. It is a singular slide for such an author as Vitringa to descend for Cyprianic literature in the third century to illustrate facts on record in the first century, ransacking the schools of Carthage, Alexandria, etc. to find preaching elders without charge to make up the portion which "ruled well" as teachers only in the apostolic time.

(5) The practical travesty of elderships at the present day, in regard to "ruling well" or ruling at all, which his theory would produce, were worse than his anachronism. If we should inquire diligently how many

"H. R.'s" and "W. C.'s" and heads of grammar schools and professors in colleges and seminaries, being all clergymen, "rule well" without preaching the "word and doctrine" laboriously, we could soon discover the mistake of a learned Vitringa in these premises. It is said there are clerical professors in our colleges, and even in our theological seminaries, who are hardly ever seen at Presbytery at all.

We have dwelt longer on this proof-text than the others because it has been challenged so ably and plausibly by Presbyterian scholars, who accept the ruling elder's office under the color, at least, of warrant from Scripture, and hold it fast for its expediency while unwilling to generalize the word "elder" so as to recognize two classes for the name. We cannot believe that either age or youth in criticism, with the most advanced erudition of our day, can do better with it than did George Gillespie at the Westminster Assembly of Divines, and we must conclude with Dr. Owen, vice-chancellor of Oxford, when giants were there: "On the first proposal of this text, a rational man who is unprejudiced, who never heard of a controversy about ruling elders, could hardly avoid the apprehension that here are two sorts of elders—some who labor in the word and doctrine, and some who do not so labor. The truth is it was interest and prejudice that first caused some learned men to strain their wits to find out evasion from the evidence of this testimony. Being so found out, some of minor abilities have been entangled by them."

Expediency of the Elder's Office.

Although a warranted expediency is the only kind that is truly ecclesiastical, and the fitness or the useful-

ness of anything ordered in the Church must have some antecedent color of divine intimation, yet the measures of sound reason for its institution are quite reciprocal in showing the validity of proof by interpretation alone. Indeed, the origin of ecclesia itself, as we have already seen, was largely due, in its institution, changes and ultimate establishment, to the circumstances of necessity in which the providence of God, as well as his word, had placed the chosen people of old. While the temple-service was all of positive command, and the slightest will-worship was utterly profane and prohibited, the service at the synagogue was rationally free, to be justified, stimulated and modified by the dictates of reason and common sense, though, of course, ever loyal and obedient to that divine authority which had fixed its main features of polity and prescribed its exercises of prayer and instruction. A beautiful illustration of blended revelation and expediency we find in Num. xi. 16, 17, that original organizing text already cited: "And the Lord said unto Moses, Gather unto me seventy men of the elders of Israel, . . . and they shall bear the burden of the people with thee, that thou bear it not alone." Here is a glimpse of everlasting expediency. The Lord said it, and helpful elders were the need of that occasion, according to the common sense of Jethro, prince and priest of Midian. And these were not of the tribe of Levi distinctly, but of all Israel, and, with the spirit of Moses upon them, they made his administration complete. Centuries of observation prove the wisdom of this expedient.

1. Teaching elders need this office to aid them in government and discipline. One man is not able to guide the manifold interests of a flock through all the

circumstances which environ and temptations that beset them without the practical wisdom and safety afforded only in a plural number of counsellors, and these familiarly conversant with the people represented. To comfort the sick and counsel the wayward and reclaim the wandering and instruct the youth in families and schools and Bible classes; to enforce the admonitions and censures of the church, so that these shall be faithfully administered and wisely adapted to every particular case of infirmity and fault,—are in part the value of a ruling eldership; and these require more than the wisdom of one man, however gifted, energetic, experienced and devoted to his duties he may be. But when we consider that the teaching elder is often infirm in health or inexperienced in youth or abstracted in study or headlong in temper and will, how much more needed is the bench of seniors who are thoroughly acquainted with the people and the treatment with which their minds must be managed and their consciences guided!

Even if the one teaching elder could perform well the multifarious duties, he ought not to be trusted with all of them: the best of men may be warped or perverted by the monopoly of power in their hands. Accumulation bends them. Pride, partiality, caprice and obstinacy ensue more or less upon the pile of responsibilities without distribution, whether they be civil or sacred, however pure the agent and well contrived the original institution. More churches have been ruined by the one-man power, even in the pastor, than by all the unwisdom of Sessions and feuds of the people that can be counted in the annals of Presbyterianism, either at home or abroad. Spiritual despotism began with the subversion of this primitive office and the discontinuance of

ruling elders. "The elders have saved the Church" has often been said in modern times.

2. The people need the office even more than their bishop does, not only for the reason stated above—that he must be assisted for their benefit and restrained for their safety—but also because the ruling elder exemplifies more completely the principle of representation which is the heart of all good government and the security of all freedom. At this point of view the office appears to be more indispensable than that of the bishop himself at the first organization and in every succeeding crisis of a vacancy or change. A Presbyterian church may exist without a pastor, but not without a ruling elder, unless it be an interval of seeking for one or more to fill the office; which waiting must be short, or dissolution ensues. At the beginning of the Scottish Reformation elders manned the organization of churches before the preachers could be had, and often nursed them long before pastors were procured. So it was in America at the planting of our churches, and is still to be observed largely in waste places and in new fields of settlement. The vitality of this office, both before and after a teaching elder is set over them as bishop or pastor, comes from the sympathy and confidence of the people, who are always best represented by some of themselves that seem to be qualified with suitable gifts and graces which they recognize but cannot impart from themselves either in creating the office or in controlling it by virtue of their suffrage. Instincts of the purest democracy are fain to lodge their interests in the hands of those who are esteemed better than themselves in capability of mind and enlightenment of conscience, making representation at once their agency and master. Repre-

sentatives, and not delegates merely, are those whom they elect to govern themselves.

3. In other branches of the visible Church where this office is not recognized or has been discarded after trial the functions of it are always reproduced under different designations, scarcely one of which is a scriptural name for distinct office. Prelacy is constrained to mitigate and to sustain its rule by the help of laymen called "vestrymen," "wardens" and "delegates," all deriving their authority from the people to manage temporal interests only or chiefly, the spiritual oversight being studiously confined to the episcopate or clergy, and that in an upper house of convocation where no layman can sit, nor even a presbyter, who must be enrolled in a lower house of convention, where the people are represented by laymen as well. This unofficial representation, however, in deliberating on affairs of the Church, is peculiarly American, condemned at the old English home—"a manifest usurpation," says the British Critic, "which must be overthrown." All officers in the Church that are distinct from clerical orders and designed to do what our elders do in sacred things are late and crude in systems of prelacy. Even vestrymen are called such after the robing-room of clergymen, and are so ill-defined in the sphere of duty that here and there even diocesan bishops complain of their aggression upon matters which are distinctly spiritual and episcopal. The truly ancient ecclesia seems to have had no confusion of offices in the denomination of elder; and if the scriptural generalization of this word had been retained, the distinction of species it includes would have distributed the functions of the office fairly enough to perpetuate harmony through all interaction.

The Wesleyan Church, with its modified episcopacy, has a "presiding elder" under bishops in rank, and he is a teaching elder as well as ruling, with a superintendence of discipline over a given district in his hands, taking the place of both ruling and teaching elders in this administration. But his exercise of judicial authority lacks, of course, the plurality of associate judges on the bench required alike by Scripture and by reason to constitute a safe tribunal of justice. "Tell it to the church," said our Lord. A single elder is not the church, of course, and, rationally, one man is not enough to satisfy all men with adjudications. The synagogue "three" is better than one elder in consultation. A plurality chosen by the people from among themselves like a jury of their peers will undoubtedly put an end to strife and preclude the murmur of dissatisfaction at any result better than decision by one individual, however wise and good he may be, especially when he is appointed over the people rather than chosen by themselves. A more interesting and valuable feature of Methodist polity is the class-leader—a selected instructor and guide of a few fellow-members who meet statedly for conference, mutual counsel and prayer. But this feature also is blended with the functions of a ruling eldership. Familiar teaching and leading at prayer-meetings, Bible-class meetings, family visitation, the examination of candidates for admission to full communion, and the dealing with members under censures of the church, make a wider field of usefulness than any class-leader occupies, and bring into exercise all the sense of spiritual wisdom and the charity of sanctified affections in building up the Church at every corner and in diffusing the savor of Christ on every walk of life.

Congregationalism has its present substitute for the ruling elders' bench in "committee-men," including deacons also, a few individuals of superior wisdom and experience, and popularity also, being chosen by the people from time to time to aid the pastor in his inspection of the flock and to help to maintain fraternity with neighboring churches and to execute the discipline which the congregation are summoned to consider and transact. And yet the substitution is regretted by the ablest independent writers, who, from John Owen to Professor George T. Ladd, have advocated the restoration and the continuance of the elder's office in ruling. The better days of New England Independency had this office. Nearly all the leading churches were provided with such representatives, and some of their noblest men have sighed for its restoration. "There are few discreet pastors," said Cotton Mather, "but what make many occasional ruling elders every year." Jonathan Edwards, in a letter to Mr. Erskine of Scotland, said, in reference mainly to the utility of this eldership, "I have long been out of conceit of our unsettled, independent, confused way of church government, and the Presbyterian way has ever appeared to me most agreeable to the word of God and the reason and nature of things."

Other systems might be surveyed with similar comparison and like conclusion. Many a function of office in well-compacted church politics we may witness under another name. But this venerable name of "elder" is the best denomination, however civilian it may have been during Hebrew theocracy, and however much it may seem tangled with the preacher's function when the legacy of teaching by Levite, prophet and apostle vested

at last in the presbyter for all remaining time. The affinities of teaching and ruling are too close to be sundered for edification, and yet not too close to be distinguished both in theoretical idea and in practical ministration. The expediency, therefore, of holding on to the prescriptive right of this designation for all intermediate powers between the bishop and the people must be manifest. The name of "lay-elder," against which Gillespie and Henderson protested two hundred and forty years ago, and Dr. Samuel Miller in a late generation, should be discarded entirely, for the interval between the teaching and the ruling elder is far less than that between the latter and the unofficial members among the people.

Whatever be the diversity of exegesis among Presbyterians about the proof-texts quoted for a scriptural warrant, all agree that the office itself is expedient, and this argument alone is of great force with even a color of divine sanction. Discipline is indispensable to the welfare of any church and is fearfully enjoined by Revelation, but it cannot be dispensed wisely and well or fully and fairly exercised without some consistory of a judicial nature between the law and the offender to make the right application. Representatives of the people must do this for them. Being, therefore, a necessary means to a divinely-appointed end, they should be considered as of authority from God. Ruling elders represent both God and man.

Historical Authority for the Office.

Within the first half of this century two distinguished Presbyterian divines—Dr. Samuel Miller, professor in the Princeton Theological Seminary, and Dr. James P.

Wilson, pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Philadelphia—opposed each other with equal ability and exhaustive research in patristic testimony, including the apostolic and all the earlier Fathers, on the office of ruling elder. The former prevailed with abiding impression and active influence over the whole Church—not only because of his position as a teacher, of his large learning and of his loyal devotion to Westminster doctrine and polity, but also because he was the survivor of the two and had the last word in a small volume published and distributed widely by the Presbyterian Board of Publication. There was no animosity between these two eminent fathers, and no inaccuracy on either side in citing and translating the facts of history; but, renowned as he was for logical discrimination, Dr. Wilson began with confused premises and too much eagerness for absolute refutation. His imperfect exegesis had furnished him with certain postulates which he was determined to make the standard of interpretation for Church history. One of these was that only two orders of office can be found in the New Testament, as in Phil. i. 1; another was that no generic sense can be given to the term "elder" or to the term "bishop" while these are used interchangeably and precisely convertible with each other. A third postulate was that there is no spiritual oversight of the flock in any other than a teaching elder. Dr. Miller, on the other hand, recognized the generic sense of "elder" in 1 Tim. v. 17 and elsewhere, and was willing to accept three orders in office—bishops, elders and deacons in diversified functions—because he considered three distinct ordinations to be proper. But only one preaching order after the time of the apostles would he acknowledge, and this called

"bishop" in relation to a particular pastorate—an elder who became *primus inter pares* in being deputed by the people and associate elders on the bench to guide the Church by the ministry of the word. These associate elders, continued in their immemorial exercise of ruling —which in the Church is, of course, a spiritual oversight — would be as properly included in the name "bishop" as in that of "elder;" hence the plural, "bishops," in Phil. i. 1. And at the first these elders, being so little distinguished from one another by their attainments, must have seemed one office much more than now, when the process of education in preparing one specially for his great office makes the distinction of eldership so manifest that superficial observation would have our elders generically rather than specifically distinct in office, and therefore not scriptural. This truer outline of interpretation takes Presbytery by the hand and leads us through the artless literature of the first ages with much more satisfaction as we find organization of the early post-apostolic Church more conformed to the model of inspiration and less deflected from the original norm than we had cause to fear in the vicissitude and hardship to which the forming period of the visible Church was exposed. The dispute over the Fathers—of the first two centuries, at least—is one of words only, a logomachy of names, "bishop," "elder," "deacon," and "deaconess," and the numerals "three," "two" and "one," applied to orders.

The first of the apostolic Fathers, and one who had probably worked with the apostle Paul, was Clement of Rome, in the first century, who represented the church at Rome in a letter to the church at Corinth on the subject of disturbances in the latter church. These

were occasioned by a revolt of the people against the authority of their officers—πρεσβύτεροι, "elders:" "Let the flock of Christ enjoy peace with its elders appointed over it;" "For ye did all things without respect of persons, and walked in the commandments of God, being obedient to those who had the rule over you, and giving all fitting honor to the presbyters among you;" "Ye, therefore, who laid the foundation of this sedition, submit yourselves to the presbyters, and receive correction so as to repent;" "It is disgraceful, beloved, yea highly disgraceful, and unworthy of your Christian profession, that such a thing should be heard of, as that the most steadfast and ancient church of the Corinthians, should, on account of one or two persons, engage in sedition against its presbyters." Prior to these quotations bearing on the subject of polity and discipline he wrote thus of the apostles: "And, preaching through countries and cities, they appointed the first-fruits, having first proved them by the Spirit, to be bishops and deacons of those who should afterward believe. Nor was this anything new, since, indeed, many ages before, it was written concerning bishops and deacons."*

These excerpts are from the purest fragment of patristic literature, next to canonical Scripture, in genuineness and authenticity, and the only uninspired writing of the first century which is received without challenge or doubt in historical tradition. From these, and others, more extended, of the same tenor, we may safely make the following inferences: (1) That no diocesan bishop, or bishop over bishop, was recognized in the first century after the apostles. As the great reason, according to Jerome, for the existence of such a hierarch was to

* Isa. lx. 17.

compose and conserve unity in the Church, and as the trouble at Corinth which Clement wrote to remedy was the distraction of unity, it is obviously sure that the total omission of such a remedy in the epistle of Clement is demonstration that no such bishop was known in the Christian Church—for the first hundred years, at least. (2) The Corinthian church at the date of this letter was guided and governed by a plurality of elders —"presbyters." (3) These were probably the consistory, or "Session," of one particular church, and were not the Presbytery of a number of churches in the same city, for a conspiracy of different and of all the churches in one city against all their officers would be almost impossible, and would be without a parallel in subsequent history. (4) It is altogether improbable that such a sedition at Corinth would be against their teaching elders alone, in view of the notable attachment of that people to their guides in teaching, signified by the rebuke of the apostle Paul for partisan and factious adherence to such officers. 1 Cor. i. 12. (5) It is fair to conclude, therefore, that this plurality of elders against which the people of Corinth had rebelled were mostly, if not all, ruling elders, according to the well-known fact of this office being unpopular, comparatively, in every age. In apostolic and reform and revival times it may be otherwise, but ordinarily the judicial bench, composed of faithful men who watch the people familiarly and intimately in the aberrations of folly and sin, are most obnoxious and disliked by the average professors. And at Corinth especially, where the body of the church had been arraigned by the apostle for its tolerance of the most flagrant offenders, there would naturally be an outbreak of opposition to the presbyters,

who represented them in discipline, while proceeding against the incestuous or any other kind of scandalous character according to Paul's direction in one particular case. 1 Cor. v. 1–6. We may safely insist, upon the whole, that the earliest uninspired document of primitive Christianity suggests on its face and contains in logical reason a ruling eldership as distinctly a feature of scriptural polity.

At the beginning of the second century we have the next phase of church government, to be noticed in the epistles of Ignatius, which plainly hint what we would naturally expect in the plurality of elders ordained in every church and left by apostles and evangelists to furnish preaching as well as ruling in the visible Church. These different functions would reasonably appear to be a blended commission—for one generation, at least, until the special designation of the teaching elder would work out the distinction, to be more and more apparent in the specific culture and preparation required for the preaching vocation. And this kind of elder, separated from his brethren at the ordinary vocations of life in being wholly given to the ministry, would be called the "bishop," while they also were bishops in their common degree of spiritual oversight, though remaining under the denomination of "elders." The bishop now would be still an elder, of course, in exercising rule conjointly, and the other elders would be bishops also in watchful supervision conjointly. A progressive development of distinction among elders in this way is precisely the sketch we find in Ignatius's writings when he so often and formally mentions bishop, presbyters and deacons in speaking of church-officers.

Without touching the "Ignatian controversy" about

the genuineness of the text which is called his, or attempting to decide—what, probably, never can be decided—whether the shorter or the longer Greek recension of the seven epistles or the lately discovered Syriac version be the most genuine, we may safely say for our purpose here that, without conceding any one of them as free from interpolation by succeeding writers, we may take the subsequent interpolation as a bigger type of the same system which that martyr occasioned by his crude and extravagant expressions before he fell into the hands of Trajan, only belated and intended for a larger scale of ecclesiastical formation.

That Ignatius meant the organization of one particular church in his oft-repeated catalogue of officers—bishop, presbyters and deacons—will be sufficiently evident in selecting two of his epistles—viz., that to the Magnesians and that to the Trallians. In neither Magnesia nor Tralles can it be admitted there was more than one particular church. The former, according to Strabo, and to Pliny also, was but fifteen miles distant from Ephesus, and the latter, Tralles, was situated a little north of Magnesia. The ecclesiastical centre of that region—and, indeed, of all Lydia, and even of Asia Minor—was Ephesus, where there was a plurality of elders, but no superior bishop mentioned in the sacred text. There could have been, therefore, only parochial episcopacy in that vicinity and region; so that the following quotations are an exact description of a presbyterian polity: "The Epistle of Ignatius to the Magnesians," chap. iii.: "Now, it becomes you also not to treat your bishop too familiarly on account of his youth, but to yield him all reverence, . . . as I have known even holy presbyters do, not judging rashly from the mani-

fest youthful appearance, but as being themselves prudent in God, submitting to him—or, rather, not to him, but to the Father of Jesus Christ, the bishop of us all." Again (ch. vi.): "I exhort you to study to do all things with a divine harmony while your bishop presides in the place of God and your presbyters in the place of the assembly of the apostles, along with your deacons. . . . Let nothing exist among you that may divide you; but be ye united with your bishop, and those that preside over you." Ch. xiii.: "Study, therefore, to be established in the doctrines of the Lord and the apostles, that so all things whatsoever ye do may prosper both in the flesh and spirit . . . with your most admirable bishop, and the well-compacted spiritual crown of your Presbytery, and the deacons who are according to God." Thus we see the primitive eldership distributed in every paragraph just as we may now distribute them according to the Presbyterian "Form" of Church government. A bishop, a bench, a plurality—a generic name for all is "Presbytery," whether in one parish singly or in several parishes collectively. And this name is a special designation wherever allusion is made to ruling. When "holy presbyters" would cherish and sustain a youthful pastor (bishop), it was to be in the way of "not judging rashly," but being prudent, submitting to him, etc. Every mention of the eldership has a tincture of judgment and ruling in the color of expression—three kinds of office, and not three orders in the same office, of preaching; three functions in the harmony of government and direction, all distinct from one another, without precluding at all the union of two in one or more of the official persons so expressly distinguished. "That so there may be a union both fleshly and spiritual," he subjoins to his

delineation of polity. Neither Ignatius nor any other apostolic Father imagined that the ultimate idea of the Church would ever be simplified to spirit alone, dispensing with organization when united to one another in union to a common Head, and sublimating the aggregate of redeemed souls to that of angels, although without some organization even angels cannot serve and help and rejoice.

Ignatius "to the holy church which is at Tralles, Asia" (ch. ii.): "It is therefore necessary, whatsoever things ye do, to do nothing without the bishop. And be ye subject also to the Presbytery, as to the apostles of Jesus Christ. . . . It is fitting, also, that the deacons, as being of the mysteries of Jesus Christ, should in every respect be pleasing to all. For they are not ministers of meat and drink, but servants of the Church of God. They are bound therefore to avoid all grounds of accusation, as they would do fire." Ch. iii.: "Let all reverence the deacons as an appointment of Jesus Christ, and the bishop as Jesus Christ, who is the Son of the Father, and the presbyters as the Sanhedrim of God and assembly of the apostles. Apart from these there is no Church." Ch. xiii.: "Fare ye well in Jesus Christ while ye continue subject to the bishop as to the command, and in like manner to the Presbytery. And do ye every man love one another with an undivided heart." These quotations from the epistle to the Trallians might be multiplied to the same effect from the same and other epistles of Ignatius which are accepted by the learned generally as most worthy of credit.

A fair analysis of these last will indicate, at the beginning of the second century: 1. That without organization there was no Church recognized as called to be

visibly or invisibly such; 2. That this organization on earth consisted of bishop, elders and deacons, with whom the people were to be officered; 3. That the faithful were to be subject *in like manner* to bishops and elders, whilst deacons also were to be reverenced as an appointment of Christ; 4. This plurality of elders in one church is likened to a plurality of apostles in council—of course, in the exercise of judicial authority—and again likened to "the Sanhedrim of God," the highest judicial authority of the Jewish Church; 5. Deacons were not considered ministers of the word, nor yet rulers like the elders, nor "ministers of meat and drink" only in the service of tables, but of spiritual charities also, and general benevolence—"servants of the Church of God." Thus we see how the famed "Theophorus," scarcely a century later than the incarnation of Jesus, precisely and repeatedly described the Presbyterian system of church government, fairly developed in the structure of a particular church. And there is not a line of all the writings properly ascribed to Ignatius which enlarges the scale of his meaning to the proportions of a diocesan episcopacy. If it be objected that even the shorter Greek recension of his letters may be questioned and has been denied by some scholars to be genuine, we have Archbishop Ussher, Archbishop Wake and Bishop Pearson to the contrary, and a great multitude of Anglican authorities besides, in maintaining at least the two epistles from which we have quoted to be genuine—so much, indeed, of concession that we have a good *ad-hominem* argument against prelacy in particular, and decided evidence that ruling elders did not all preach and that deacons did not preach at all. Presbytery in each organization, however, had begun to allow the

public teacher, becoming *primus inter pares*, a special episcopate in the parish, and so to become *the* bishop, whilst the oversight of elders engrossed in ruling only would retain the exercise of discipline and only that much of oversight which is necessarily implied in this ordinance.

Later than the martyrdom of Ignatius was that of Polycarp, who suffered about the middle of the second century. Though he himself is called by early writers bishop of Smyrna, and doubtless was so in the parochial sense, being pastor of that particular flock, and by his contemporaries in the ministry of that age exhorted to be "personally acquainted with every member, to seek out all by name and not overlook even the servantmen and maids of his charge," yet, in writing to the Philippians, whom the apostle Paul greeted "with the bishops and deacons," he also mentioned but two orders of office, which he denominated "elders [presbyters] and deacons," without mentioning "bishop" at all, showing the scriptural identity of presbyter and bishop. In chap. vi. he gives the duties required of presbyters, evidently in the generic sense of the word—teachers and rulers both, the prevailing import being characteristic of the elders in their ancient and original duties and qualifications of inspection and rule: "And let the presbyters be compassionate and merciful to all, bringing back those that wander, visiting all the sick, and not neglecting the widow, the orphan or the poor, but always providing for that which is becoming in the sight of God and men, abstaining from all wrath, respect of persons and unjust judgment, keeping far off from all coveteousness, not quickly crediting [reports] against any one, not severe in judgment, as knowing

that we are all under a debt of sin. If, then, we entreat the Lord to forgive us, we ought also ourselves to forgive; for we are before the eyes of our Lord and God, and we must all appear at the judgment-seat of Christ, and must every one give an account of himself." Plainly, this charge suits a body of presbyters who are—in the majority, at least—ruling elders, and must appear amazingly defective on the hypothesis that all the presbyters were preachers. Not a word is here about the gospel to be preached in season and out of season, rightly dividing the word of truth and giving to every one his portion. This fragment of antiquity, which no critic has challenged for its genuineness, must reveal to us a ruling eldership distinctly continued in the second century. For, surely, this "apostolical presbyter," as he was called by his pupil Irenæus, having been conversant, as Clement had been, with the apostles of our Lord, would not have headed the address of his letter "Polycarp and the presbyters with him" if these had all been preaching elders, and say not a word about preaching itself in the body of his epistle, which is one of extended and minute injunction of duty and behavior, distinctly characteristic of "ruling well" in each particular church.

Belonging to the first half of the second century, we may notice, without ascertaining dates precisely, fragments which Irenæus and Eusebius have partially preserved, first gleaning a passage or two from Hermas of Rome, who was contemporary with Clement, and like him, most probably, meant by the name in Scripture. He speaks of elders always in the plural number as exercising authority in the church. *The Pastor of Hermas* had a popularity for two or three centuries in the early Church analogous, it has been said, to that of

the *Pilgrim's Progress*, by John Bunyan, through these last generations. Though extremely fanciful, and even frivolous at times, it must have had substantial meaning to the mind of that heroic age, in which it had a currency next to that of canonical history and epistle, and even read in some churches, according to tradition, as if given by inspiration for that purpose. In "Vision" 2 and chap. iv. we read thus: "But you will read the words in this city along with the presbyters who preside over the church." In "Vision" 3 and chap. v. we read: "Hear now with regard to the stones which are in the building. Those square white stones which fitted exactly into each other are apostles, bishops, teachers and deacons who have lived in godly purity, and have acted as bishops and teachers and deacons chastely and reverently to the elect of God." Manifestly, the bishops here mentioned, coming after the apostles and plural in number, must be presbyters identically as the two names are used in the New Testament, and these are expressly made distinct from "teachers," who come after them in this enumeration. And these varieties of office are "fitted exactly to each other" in observing the sequence of history as to their appointment: first, apostles; next, elders, "ordained in every church;" next, teachers, when the apostles had finished their testimony and devolved upon the elders' bench the province of teaching for all time, and therefore gradually distinguished from the body of elders by the development of fitness in some—not all—for ministry of the word, and hence called "teachers," though remaining bishops to preside over the Church in common with other elders, who remained on the judicial bench to rule. Thus we have, on the whole breadth of gospel teaching, in Hermas, a

significant distinction made, corresponding to what Paul made in 1 Tim. v. 17.

The fragment of Papias, called "bishop of Hierapolis," by subsequent historians a martyr, who was said to have been a hearer of the apostle John, and by Eusebius to have been a learned man well acquainted with the Scriptures and the resources of history, must be dated in the first half of the second century. It is remarkable for the total omission of the word "bishop," giving even to the apostles the name "elders," indicating that the very highest office in the Church of the New Testament is that of presbyter: "If, then, any one who had attended on the elders came, I asked minutely after their sayings what Andrew or Peter said, or what was said by Philip, or by Thomas or by James, or by John or by Matthew, or by any other of the Lord's disciples; which things Aristion and the presbyter John, the disciples of the Lord, say. For I imagined that what was to be got from books was not so profitable to me as what came from the living and abiding voice." The parlance of the apostolic age—in which both Peter and John, we know, called themselves elders—reproduced in this way three generations later, makes, we see, the highest dignity in the Church to be the eldership, and a plurality of elders to be the normal organization of every church, and the certainty that these could not all have been preachers without a failure of the Church upon her mission, when the harvest was so great and the laborers were so few, in having a surplusage like this in crowded occupation at home. Only a plurality of ruling—not teaching—elders in each organization can solve the enigma.

About the middle of the second century Justin Martyr

is to be noticed. He was the first Christian philosopher, and seems to have been successively Stoic, Pythagorean and Platonic before his conversion to Christianity. It is uncertain whether he was ever an ecclesiastic himself, though pre-eminently a teacher and an apologist for Christianity. In his apologies to the Antonines he describes minutely the ministrations of word and ordinances by the pastor of a Christian congregation, whom he calls president of the Church in using the Greek term προεστὼς—the same that in its plural form is used in 1 Tim. v. 17 to express "elders that rule." Here it has been alleged that both the ruler and the preacher must be included in the notion of presiding, and, no other kind of officers than deacons being mentioned by Justin, it has been concluded that no ruling elders distinctly existed between president and deacon under his observation. But we cannot believe that because one presiding elder was both ruler and teacher, therefore no other elders could be associated with him in the oversight of a church as ruling elders only, yet virtually presiding also. The Ephori of ancient Sparta—a magistracy of five coequal censors elected by the people—had a common supervision of public affairs competent to regulate kings as well as people with supreme arbitration; yet one of these, with the consent of the others, presided at their council, and was called by this very name προεστὼς, without any one supposing that he was alone in such supremacy or that the chosen associates were inferior in rank to their president. The force of this objection is but nominal. Ecclesiastics who reject our system of ruling elders are in the habit of dubbing these officers with disparaging names prefixed, such as *lay* elders, who are *subordinate* officials, etc., all of which

we consider gratuitous. The ruling elder and the teaching are co-ordinately presbyters in representing alike the people whom they guide and by whom they are chosen.

When we proceed to the third century, the first Father to be noticed is Irenæus, who suffered death at its threshold, A. D. 202, probably at Lyons. The phraseology of his ecclesiasticism is decidedly Presbyterian. He writes of presbyters and bishops being the same officers with such designations interchangeably used, urging against the heretics a derivation of truth from the apostles through the channel of succeeding "presbyters" carefully transmitted, making the office of presbyter the highest in the Christian Church and the chain of connection and identity with her founders. Apostolical succession is presbyterial succession, and of course to be traced through the representative presidents of presbyterian organizations. In all the ages corporations act and speak through their presiding officers, but this never means the president is the only corporator who has authority, or that his oversight is unaided by his peers, or that he acts without their counsel in the course of direction. On the contrary, in the light of all observation and common sense, the use of this appellative in connection with "presbyter," such as Irenæus introduced in the phrase *πρεσβύτεροι προστάτες*, "presiding elders," must indicate other elders coexisting who had authority without formally presiding over those they ruled or those with whom they ruled. Such elders would naturally be passed over in silence by the writer simply because of their equality in rank and identity in work with the president. It is true beyond a doubt that if "*lay*" presbyters, or elders of "subordinate" and "in-

ferior" class, had existed then, they would have been mentioned by Justin and Irenæus, just as they would be now in the standard of Presbyterian polity if they existed. But we know of no such elders in the reformation and reconstruction. It may be convenient for some opponents now to invent the adjectives, but they do not hold : words may be things, but they do not make things.

There is one passage in Irenæus, however, that is more than silence in regard to some classification of elders. In Book 3, ch. xiv., referring to the memorable interview of the apostle Paul with the elders of Ephesus meeting him at Miletus, Irenæus thus writes : "The bishops and presbyters who were from Ephesus and other neighboring cities, being convened at Miletus, because he (Paul) was hastening to spend Pentecost at Jerusalem," etc. This passage—which mentions bishops and presbyters distinctively, as if they were not the same, though every other page of Irenæus used them promiscuously—would indeed be contrary and inconsistent with himself and afford a handle to diocesan episcopacy, bating the wonder that nothing is said of "bishops" in the New-Testament account of the case. But suppose we make the bishops teaching elders and the presbyters along with them ruling elders; then everything is clear and consistent according to Scripture, and confirmatory of every position we take in this analysis of the Fathers. We have no need of detecting interpolation or bad translation here. It indicates the gradual process of distinction for the presiding presbyter among his brethren after they had chosen him to be their preacher and pastor of the people, and that Irenæus preferred the designation of "bishop" to that of "president," which Justin Martyr had introduced, and through whom, as repre-

senting the bench of rulers in each particular church, the apostolical tradition had come down to his time.

The same construction must be made of the little we find in the literature of Clemens Alexandrinus, which belongs to the last thirty years of the second century, on the church polity of his age. He also speaks of bishops and elders interchangeably as the same official rank and one only in the ministry of the word. And yet, when he comes to speak of the heavenly state and the degrees of perfect felicity there, he affirms that these will correspond to the visible dignities attained in the militant Church on earth, which he makes threefold—bishops, elders and deacons. In this particular, then, we must charge on that accomplished scholar inconsistency or tautology of speech if he does not intend elders that ruled only and well in the distinction made on high. If it be said that such a distinction among elders on earth would have been expressed by Clement in describing the correspondence, we may answer that it is definitely enough expressed when he makes distinction between bishops and elders, maintaining, at the same time, that these were identical in the ministerial office. The first term, "bishop," is the elder that both rules and teaches, the latter capacity awarded him by his colleagues on the bench; the second term, "presbyter," must, therefore, import that plurality on the bench which abides in the capacity of ruling only. We agree with objectors to this interpretation that because "lay" presbyters—an "intermediate" and "inferior" class of presbyters—were not mentioned at all by Clement they could have had no existence in his day, and say, moreover, that they can have no existence in this day. For neither laical rank nor inferior grade of elders can be found in

our constitution, and we must consider it extremely illogical to beg the question by arbitrary misnomer fixed upon an order which existed in the Church before Christ was born, and which he deigned to honor by his personal attention and that of his apostles.

Cyprian was bishop of Carthage at the middle of the third century, and has been considered *the* churchman of his age. Having been a teacher of rhetoric before his conversion, and therefore competent in the use of language to distinguish with propriety things which differ, he used the significant phrase "*teaching* elders" to denote as a class presbyters admitted to preach.* A definite correlation to this must be, of course, our phrase of "*ruling* elders." Anglican expositors frankly admit it. His translator and scholiast, Marshall, says, "It is hence, I think, apparent that all presbyters were not teachers, but assisted the bishop in other parts of his office." And Bishop Fell to the same purport quotes our text, 1 Tim. v. 17, saying, "St. Paul appears to have made a distinction in ancient times between teaching and ruling elders." Dodwell, of the seventeenth century—another learned and strenuous advocate of prelacy—concedes explicitly that Cyprian distinguished teaching from ruling elders, making the same distinction which Paul made in 1 Tim. v. 17.† It is worthy of remark that Cyprian did not make the ruling class inferior to the teaching in rank, but only said the teaching elders' place was more "distinguished."

Origen, of the same century, despite his dreamy speculations in doctrine, and exegesis also, could observe practical usages with all the simplicity and candor of a child, and one might imagine a Presbyterian church of the

* *Ep. to Phil.*, sec. 6. † *Cyprianic Dissertations*, sec. 6.

nineteenth century before his eyes when he wrote in his third book against Celsus, (chap. li.) the following description: "There are some rulers appointed whose duty it is to inquire concerning the manners and conversation of those who are admitted, that they may debar from the congregation such as commit filthiness." This is the Cambridge translation, by Spencer, in the seventeenth century. The Edinburgh translation, recently published in the Ante-Nicene Library, though less pointed for use in this connection, "persons" being the word instead of "rulers," is made substantially the same in meaning—that is, the discipline of the Church was exercised, not by her teachers only, nor yet by her assembled members at large, but by persons chosen for this ministration especially, to inspect the character and the conduct of such as are to be admitted to the communion of believers or to be excluded as unworthy of such privilege. The accuracy of this and other gleaning from the third century is vouched for by the Madgeburg Centuriators—a great Lutheran treasury of Church history—in one sentence: "The right of deciding respecting such as were to be excommunicated, or of receiving such as had fallen, was vested in the elders of the church." *

Here our induction and our detail of history may well desist when we approach the last shades of this vital office in our system as its origin and its outline were given at the beginning. And the most compendious way of closing the line of historical testimony before the great Reformation is to group in half a dozen particulars the facts which ante-Nicene and Nicene developments afford.

* Cent. 3, cap. 7.

(1) The enhancement of episcopacy in every parish. Organization of a particular church necessarily departed from that of the synagogue in having a fixed ministry at length, easily arranged in consistency with all other features of the old ecclesia and required by the "everlasting gospel." Beginning with a plurality of co-equal elders in every church and a consignment of the great commission to these representatives of the people, whom the people chose by their own suffrage, the mission of God's word, when apostles departed and supernatural gifts were withdrawn, exacted of this venerable bench more than the direction of preaching, as the elders had hitherto discerned and selected it, among the many who went to and fro with the gifts which laid the foundations of the Church. Within each established parish provision must now be made for a permanent service of acceptable preaching. Doubtless every eldership retained much of the elevation if not the endowment, much of the zeal and consecration if not the miracle, of that initial period, and piety itself is a great talent; yet, comparatively, even on that high level, there must have remained a great diversity of gifts. All were presumed to have capacity for ruling well, or they would not at such a time have been chosen to the place of judges and directors. All were "apt to teach" also, or they would not answer for judges and rulers. No man, either in Church or in State, is fit to rule who cannot explain to the people ruled the nature of and the reason for all his decisions. As already observed, the great questions to be answered by the elders now are, "Who will specially go in and out among us to break the bread of life?" "Who will go for us far hence, even to the ends of the earth, with the glad tidings of salvation through Jesus

Christ?" Common sense among the elders must have been competent to solve their problem: "That man among ourselves or among our people who is best qualified—who, like Aaron of old, is one of whom God would say, 'I know that he can speak well'—must be our choice." And the preacher at home, having the elder's ordination and the people's vote for this public function, would, of course, unite ruling and teaching together in the oversight to which he is chosen with such a specialty, and would soon be called the "bishop" with distinction of emphasis. The other elders, retaining still a concurrent oversight and not being called to give themselves wholly to it, would unite with a spiritual oversight the ordinary industries of life to provide things honest in the sight of all men, and would thus adorn the doctrine they held by consistent walk and conversation as ensamples to the flock. But, obviously, the guidance and the government would be conspicuously trusted more and more to the teaching elder, whose privilege, and whose duty also, were to live at the altar with exclusive occupation, to study the people as well as the books, and to suggest to the Session or the consistory of elders the measures proper to be taken in the management of their charge. Being but an "earthen vessel" in possessing such a treasure, and only too willing by nature to covet more in proportion as responsibilities were multiplied, the bishop would gradually engross all authority of both word and rule, exemplifying sadly the baleful effects of ambition in the Church as well as in the world. The chief obstacle in this way of aggrandizement and monopoly was the faithfulness of ruling elders in his council, whose independence could not easily forget its own memorial and could hardly be

compromised when the usurper was one of themselves. Struggles ensued.

(2) And the next step of the bishop was to humble this order of his fellows and to promote the deacons—servants of the church—to a position of higher dignity than that of the rulers. They had always been more subservient to his purpose, and they were now promoted to the rank of teachers—without, indeed, power to rule in the parish, which, however, was effectually neutralized in making the original rulers a third and subordinate rank, whose authority, therefore, could no longer be more than a name. This altered gradation is fully manifested in the *Gesta Purgationis, etc.*, which appeared about the end of the third century, where the orders of church-office are catalogued thus: *Presbyteri, diaconi et seniores.* The bishop (parochial yet) now took to himself the name of "presbyter" as it had been used at first—convertibly with "bishop"—and had the deacons put next and the ruling elders put last, under a name which was appellative, and not official, signifying merely old men who were supposed to have attained wisdom by experience.

(3) This degradation could not be endured by ruling elders, and the next conflict was either to have their authority restored or to have the now nominal office discontinued. And, seeing the teacher was honored more than the ruler who had been disparaged and become a blank under episcopal usurpation, those that loved the Church more than the world, the so-called seniors, now aspired to become ministers of the word and the sacraments. The bishop complied as far as possible with such application, because it would obliterate an office which had been an obstacle and an offence

to him so long. But in consenting to this he reduced the elders, from whose hands originally his own office came, to the condition of laymen, favoring the laical and official alike as candidates for the ministry, and of course exalting his own authority as the sole ordainer to any gradation of office. This deplorable inversion was at the ragged edge of consummation when the Council of Nice was called by Constantine.

(4) At this memorable epoch Church and State were united in a theocracy which compounded the Jewish hierarchy of three orders in the ministry with a reconstructed expanse of secular gradation that enlarged the sphere of clerical ambition, confederating spiritual and imperial authority from the base to the summit of carnal promotion. Of course the robust manliness of ruling elders had no place in that colossal system, and yet the creeping ambition of parish bishop lost its final attainment of ruling power in the submergence of elders when itself had to be yielded to another above him whom the empire denominated "diocesan," and the old name of "presbyter" was restored to its precedence in regard to deacon, and yet divested wholly of its primitive significance in ruling; and ever since it has descended in papal and prelatic organizations as presbytery without power even to ordain except as equipage in the company of a bishop, when he does it with exclusive authority assumed, and they merely concur in a formal way.

Now, on this fourfold induction from authentic history we may well submit a challenge to those who reject the ruling eldership as no feature of the Church in its original constitution, with these interrogatories: How could it be that all the Christian elders in Scripture

mention were preachers of the word, and a plurality of these in every church, however small, and living alike at the altar, to which they were to be given "wholly," and yet surrender to one of themselves the whole business of teaching and ruling together, eliminating the essence of the old ecclesia, which our Lord and his apostles honored and approved, just as soon as Paul died and while the last of the twelve, John, was yet living? How could it be that deacons—the servants of the church—were advanced to the ministry of the word, and therefore put above and before elders, at the end of the second century, if the elders had been all and always ministers of the word before? How could it be that presbyters in the third century who desired to become preachers, if they had been such already and from the beginning, had to stand on common ground with the laity in making application for license and passing trials of fitness under the authority of a bishop? And if all the elders with whom the New-Testament Church began were alike teaching and ruling presbyters, why is it that such inseparable union of the two capacities has been disrupted by popery and by prelacy? Presbyters with them may preach, but may not rule, elders with Presbyterians may rule, and may not preach. The converse is just as good on one side as on the other in formula, yet "and" is better than "but" in this comparison, for it makes room for two classes of presbyters —those who rule only, and those who both rule and teach. To deny ruling to the presbyter is against the meaning of this word, and against the Bible also.

We find another proof historically of the existence of ruling elders from the beginning as a distinct office in retrospective expressions of regret for the discontinuance,

and also traces of its lingering in corners of Christendom before these were quite swept over by a swollen Catholicism wedded now to secular imperialism. For example, we recall the testimony of Ambrose in the fourth century: "For indeed among all nations old age is honorable. Hence it is that the synagogue, and afterward the church, had elders, without whose counsel nothing was done in the church; which by what negligence it grew into disuse I know not, unless, perhaps, by the sloth—or, rather, pride—of the teachers, while they alone wish to be accounted something." The only evasion of this remarkable passage ever attempted comes from the first sentence by turning "elders" into adjectives, and falling back to the appellative origin of a proper name or a technical term. Obviously, the antithesis in this passage requires the word "elders" to be taken in the official sense as much as the word "teachers." If in the one term it has only an adjective sense, so it must be in the other; and "teachers" cannot mean official ministers of the word any more distinctly than parents and schoolmasters as well as preachers. Besides, "among all nations old age is honorable" still, whatever be the changes of significance in language and in derivation of names.

We may return to North Africa, where conservative Christianity lingered so long, and see in the letters of Augustine the significant address "To the beloved brethren, the clergy, the elders, and all the people at Hippo." This enumeration resembles the style of Cyprian, more than a century before, in distinguishing elders as teaching and ruling, the teaching being the "more distinguished" class. We may pass over to Spain a century later, and find in the directions of

Isidore these words: "The elders of the people are first to be taught, that by them such as are placed under them may be more easily instructed." This exhortation of the fifth century ought to be translated for every particular church in this generation, as it implies a capital qualification of ruling elders in being made "apt to teach," privately and socially, as they themselves are publicly instructed by "teaching elders." Coming back to Rome, also, another century later, we hear Gregory the Great, in one of his epistles (19th, 2 Lib.) cautioning the faithful against being too ready to believe a bad report about a clergyman, add this direction: "Let the truth be diligently investigated by the elders of the church who may be at hand, and then, if the character of the act demand it, let the proper punishment fall on the offender." Dr. Samuel Miller of Princeton, in his admirable *Essay* on ruling elders, which has done so much to conserve, establish and advance this noble office in the Presbyterian system, has pursued more exhaustively the gleanings of history on the subject than is possible within our limits. Let it be read and pondered still. A long list of names illustrious for learning and candor, making an ecclesiastic catholicity on the subject of representative eldership, might be added in advance of Dr. Miller, whose tribute he has gathered with so much balance of critical judgment and faithful citation, such as Bullinger, Beza, Turretine, Van Mæstricht, Tremellius, Piscator, Grotius, Muscovius and Neander. And prior to these were the witnesses—Waldenses and Bohemian brethren—who testified at the Reformation that long before the days of Calvin they had ruling elders distinct from teaching to represent the people in the care and government

of their churches, and that they copied the Genevan model at last only for a more perfect restoration of what the fury of persecution had marred in the original platforms. Catholicism had wandered from them in governing the people without representation, and without even a plurality of counsellors on the bench of any tribunal.

CHAPTER XII.

THE QUALIFICATIONS OF RULING ELDERS.

THE following are full and apparently exhaustive lists in which it is conceded on all sides among biblical and fair interpreters that bishops and elders are names for the same office: 1 Tim. iii. 2–7: "A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behavior, given to hospitality, apt to teach; not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (for if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?) not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride, he fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil." Tit. i. 5–9: "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee; if any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly. For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not self-willed, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre; but a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate; holding fast the faithful word as he

hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers."

If all the elders to be so qualified were preachers from the date of these directions, why is it not so said on the face of this inspired charter? Not one word contains a hint of this except *διδακτικόν*, "apt to teach." 1 Tim. iii. 2. But this one word is susceptible of generalization large enough to embrace teaching and ruling elders both, and all parents, teachers in schools, and, indeed, the whole adult membership of the visible Church, who are as far as possible to be instructors of one another. The only clause in the second passage (Tit. i. 9: "Holding fast the faithful word, as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers") would apply to the minister of gifts without ordination, like Stephen, and also every believer of enlightened and strong convictions, in defending the faith. Doubtless the ministry of the word officially is included in such a formula, and perhaps mainly; but certainly it is not exclusively the function of preachers to hold fast the faithful word as they have been taught for such a purpose at any time or in any generation.

Among these qualifications we may generalize the significance more largely still, and give a passive as well as an active sense to nearly all the particulars enumerated—especially so with that precise and specific word which is regarded as peculiarly distinctive, "apt to teach"—*διδακτικόν*. In its active sense, fitness for teaching, as we have seen, it is broader than any generalization we can give to "presbyter;" but, according to some of the best lexicographers, Schleusner and others, it may be taken as passive in the sense of docile or teachable,

like *διδακτοὶ* in John vi. 45 and elsewhere. The only other instance of its use in Scripture is 2 Tim. ii. 24: "And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle to all men, apt to teach, patient," etc. The word in the Vulgate translating this term is *docibilem*—that is, teachable himself, that he may "in meekness instruct those that oppose themselves," etc. Thus it accords with the whole context that the servant of the Lord, without wrangling on "foolish and unlearned questions," should be candid, open to conviction, truth-loving, instead of being dogmatically positive and prejudiced and proof against reason.

Here, then, is the marvellous reduction to which we come in testing the confident claim that all New-Testament elders must be the public and official teachers of the Church—a solitary word used but twice in the Bible, in both instances meaning "qualified" and "willing to teach," either publicly or privately, if it be taken in an active sense; and in both it may make just as good sense, in its connection, to be taken passively and rendered "docility." The fact is when the New Testament mentions ministers of the word distinctly they are called "ambassador," "evangelist," "steward," "teacher," "angel," "builder," "workman"—any analogous or adjective name but "elder," which is always generic after the apostles left the stage, if not sooner when any one during their time passed over from the transient ministry of gifts to that of permanent orders. This generic sense of ruling merely and ruling combined with public representative teaching, the former inherited from the synagogue, and the latter, with the same inheritance, being a supervenient function, coming on the bench as preternatural gifts and inspired witnesses

passed away, must be the complex import of "elder." If not, why does the sentiment of ruling pervade the whole catalogue of qualifications, and not one distinct averment of oratorical fitness and ability is to be discerned? Moses and the prophets choose the man who can "speak well" and tell us of "the eloquent orator," and will the glorious ministration of the Spirit dispense with such fitness for the New-Testament ministry? When Moses declined the call to be "spokesman unto the people" because he was not "eloquent," the Lord was angry with such a diffidence as would not even try to be speaker, though it was urged with the promise, "I will be with thy mouth;" he was not, therefore, excluded from the embassy, but continued in the chief direction, and one of the same family—his brother—was chosen to be the speaker, while Moses remained as counsellor and guide: "He shall be to thee instead of a mouth, and thou shalt be to him instead of God." Was this grand old precedent to be lost on the Christian Church when the crisis came upon her elders to conduct preaching at home and send ambassadors to the ends of the earth with a gospel to be spoken to all nations? Must the venerable men who had been appointed in the ministry of apostles and evangelists to serve in pluralities on the bench of ruling in our synagogue be compelled to preach or be superseded in their places by those who would and could preach well? If so, the departure of apostles must have been the occasion of a revolution instead of establishment in the old ecclesia, and the two Testaments fail to be in unison or identity in building a visible Church on the Rock of ages.

The lists of qualification for elders which are given

by inspiration will be understood, therefore, to belong to the root or trunk of this one great office, considered as a genus. In this light only can we see that every phrase or word is applicable to both the branches we adopt in our system; and if we say the lists belong only to one branch, the teaching eldership, we may well be astonished that aptitudes for the distinctive work of preaching which have been so important in every age and are more and more important as the culture of the world goes on, and which are at this hour a chief concern of the Church in her Assemblies, pertaining to theological seminaries, colleges, education, missions, etc., should be touched in Holy Scripture with but one ambiguous word that means private and social as much or more than public teaching. We cannot understand it without making elders generic in the purport of their name and giving to him who rules only and to him who both rules and teaches, identified as they are in jurisdiction, these lists of qualification which belong to the elders or bishops of the Bible.

Teaching and preaching are not precisely the same in revelation or in our comments thereon, else the sacred writers are chargeable with tautology in such passages as these: Matt. iv. 23; Acts v. 42; xv. 35. There must be, therefore, a generic sense in which we distribute these functions among the elders we generalize, making the specification for each class according to the position or the calling. The main distinction is in the proportion rather than in the kind, and so we may say the elder who lives at the altar preaches, and the elder who earns his bread, like private and unofficial members, in legitimate business of a secular nature, teaches. We have noticed that ruling of any kind implies teaching

of some kind in order to be obeyed intelligently and with a willing mind; and especially it must be so in sacred ruling, which consists in the disciplinary application of the divine word to offences and the ordinary direction of all affairs according to precepts of the word or to logical inferences therefrom. No man is fit to be a ruling elder who is not at all "apt to teach."

The preacher is necessarily a ruler, both keys—that of doctrine and that of discipline—being intrinsically contained in the authority essential to preaching. But ruling to the whole extent of spiritual power is not more essential to his office than is teaching to some extent essential to the office of ruling elder. The professor in his chair and a licentiate as probationer in the pulpit may teach without conception of ruling authority in his lessons, but actual office in the Church begins because it is authorized and continued by the manifestation and proof of such a beginning in lessons of practical instruction to the end. Neither admonition nor rebuke, nor even comfort, can be administered by any elder without some teaching; and the more lucid the process of discipline is made to the understanding, the more effectual it is upon the heart and the life.

It is in this view of inseparable twining together at the root that the very same qualifications are alleged of two orders in office covered by the common denomination of "elder." Two inseparable elements, ruling and teaching, pervade alike these branches of office, which vary in proportion only and the formality of distinct ordination. And although, as we view the full development now, since teaching has become so much more the conspicuous and important element in consequence of the vast accumulation of lore both for and against

Christianity which the teaching elder especially must deal with, yet the true history and the last analysis will equally constrain us to find at the basis identity enough to be called by the same denomination. The supervening function which came upon the primitive bench when the apostles dropped their mantle of witnessing upon it calls for a distinct and specific ordination to herald the commission of teaching elders, being made special representatives of a world-wide gospel, belonging to the Church at large, and yet authorized to remain at home, if need be, in joint administration of rule with the local governors who sat with them under one and the same ordination at the first.

Nor is this all. There is a space between the pastor and the people now which must be filled with authorized teachers—men who are able and willing to teach and exhort from house to house, able, in the absence or the sickness of the bishop, to lead the worship of a whole congregation in a social way of prayer and reading and familiar exhortation; else no congregation can prosper much with consolidated strength and growth, and no pastor can long endure the burden, more onerous every year as the flock increases and the culture of the world advances. The man who rules well in any church must be "apt to teach" in conducting Bible-classes, directing Sunday-schools, testing the soundness of instruction there, judging even what the preacher says to the people, with meek and kind discrimination "saying to Archippus, Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it." As a teacher the ruling elder may perfectly supply the church with that character of immense utility and influence in the Methodist polity called the class-leader, and the

whole perplexity with which most churches have been tried in solving the problem of lay-preaching would be for ever precluded in our system if only we appreciated the ruling elder in the true meaning of his office, and selected him according to the scriptural qualifications of an elder in general.

But if we should surrender the broad exegesis of "apt to teach" that makes it even more generic than "elder," which it qualifies, we would not give up the genus of this name in sacred use, for we have it in other principles of interpretation. It is the usage of Scripture to say things of a whole order which belong strictly to the most prominent part of that order. Thus, in Deut. xxxiii. 8, 10, it is said respecting the whole tribe of Levi, "They shall teach Jacob God's judgments, and Israel his law; they shall put incense before him, and whole burnt-offerings on his altar." And so we are told again, when Hezekiah charged them on a particular occasion, he thus addressed the Levites in general: "My sons, be not now negligent, for the Lord hath chosen you to stand before him, to serve him, and that you should minister to him and burn incense." Here in one passage the Levites in general are said to have been originally appointed, and in the other are expressly charged to burn incense. And yet we know from many other places that it really belonged to the priests only—a part of the Levitical family—to burn incense. (See Ex. xxx. 7, 8; Num. xvi. 40; 1 Sam. ii. 28.) Surely such a logic of language may be applied to the whole family of New-Testament elders. What seems to be predicated in one place of all elders or bishops, that they must be apt to teach, may well be understood as only a distinctive emphasis placed on the most promi-

nent portion of the eldership, whilst others in the office may still be called "elders" just as fairly as the priests were Levites, and the house of Aaron belonged to the tribe of Levi.

Rank of Ruling Elder.

Assuming the genuine sense of "elder" and the warrant for his office from Scripture, expediency and historical tradition, we must regard the rank of ruling elder as equal to that of teaching elder in representative power, official jurisdiction and permanent tenure of office.

(1) A representative is made by the gift of God and will of the people represented. A certificate of his election by a given constituency entitles him to act for his people as the peer of any other member in any assembly that is called to act for a part or the whole visible Church denominated. There his duties are undefined in advance, though circumscribed within certain constitutional limits and performed according to the dictates of his own conscience as well as the true interests of his people. Their will has made him more than a delegate merely who is to be actuated precisely by the will of those who send him. A true representative combines with the will of his constituency the will of God in his conscience and the superior enlightenment of his own mind in the circumstances of any case which his constituents cannot know so well. And thus the action of a representative may be against the wishes of his people, and yet be faithful and true to their best welfare and interest. Factor for God and his people and himself in his own sincere convictions, his work is well done. And thus it is that all elders of the Church,

teaching and ruling alike, are true representatives of the people, though the latter be considered more immediate or special because of their manifest contact with the represented in secular engagements of life.

(2) The ruling elder is an officer also in the Church. And this is something more than representation. Beyond the suffrage which may choose him to stand indefinitely for the interest of constituents, he has a public duty to perform that is defined and specific, and a peculiar formality of induction prescribed in ordination, also functions to exercise which are distinct prerogatives, and he is always presumed to have for the place a special fitness or gift which mere election cannot bestow. His official functions, like those of the teaching elder, may be described as both co-operative and single. In co-operation the elders, without distinction, exercise jurisdiction together, and govern the Church by assemblies. The core of safe representation has always been plural: no one man was ever authorized to govern the Church. Safety is in the multitude of counsellors, and varieties of office, occupation and care always make an assembled council wiser in balancing and juster in decision. For this reason one house of assembled authority is better than two ever since apostles, elders and brethren constituted in one body the first council at Jerusalem.

But we are also to distinguish the power of order from that of jurisdiction, in which we contemplate the diversities of office in the administration of each. The teaching elder, by the power of order, is to preach the gospel to a congregation statedly, and to dispense the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper; to execute the decisions of any juridical assembly with an

authoritative announcement, like that of James in the council at Jerusalem, and application of sentence to the censured, which is by word; and also to carry with him the commission upon him, to all places, without any formality of renewal, as he removes from place to place. On the other hand, the ruling elder, by the power of order, in representing the people, does all that the people do as required in consecrated fellowship to instruct the ignorant, warn the unruly, exhort the negligent, comfort the afflicted, support the weak, visit the sick, restore the fallen, reconcile the variant and contend for the truth,—all this under the perfect obligation of office, besides the imperfect obligation of charity, in common upon all members alike, whether official or unofficial, as they have opportunity. The defined responsibility of office and the undefined impulse of charity are the double weight of duty which deserves the "double honor" assigned to elders who "rule well."

What the teaching elder does by the power of his order is valid without a vote of the sessional judicatory; what the ruling elder does by the power of his order is likewise valid without either bench or bishop to sanction it; but anything done by either of these elders, without the other, which belongs to their joint exercise of jurisdiction is not valid, but null and void, except in cases of singular necessity when consistorial advice cannot be had and the transaction must wait for approval after the fact. Such exceptions, however, may be ventured only by the elder who has public teaching and ruling united in his office. A parochial bishop may confirm or admit a person to sealing ordinances in full communion where no other elder is at hand to concur and none to hinder, and the exceptional act goes up to a higher

judicatory for subsequent review and silent approbation generally.

If the teaching elder should baptize an infant irregularly, contrary to the settled order of the Church in regard to sponsors, the qualification of the parents or other parties that present it, and even the dissent of his Session, the baptism is valid notwithstanding, if it be with scriptural formula, because it belongs to his power of order distinctly in the great commission; which power of jurisdiction may counsel, but not override or annul. If, on the other hand, he should venture to excommunicate an offender of his own motion, without the vote of a church Session, the act is null and void, for it belongs to that power of jurisdiction which must be joint in numbers. The keys of the kingdom in our hand should open with more facility than they shut the door. Philip alone could baptize the eunuch, but Paul alone would not have the offender at Corinth "put away" without process "together" and punishment "inflicted of many." The difference of capacity in the distinction thus made is not scholastic merely, but practical and analogous, though as old as the Church of Scotland, and may serve at once to explain the interaction of elders, adjust the moderatorship of assemblies and maintain their equality of rank in the exercise of the highest ecclesiastical power of jurisdiction. (See the Second Book of Discipline, A. D. 1578, ch. i. secs. 7, 8.)

(3) Permanency of tenure is the third particular to be noticed in the parity of elders. If the preaching elder is ordained for life in good behavior, so is the ruling elder. Both are officers in the Church, and there is no mention made in the Bible of any officer being appointed for a definite term of years. Both are rulers, and the

original bench of the ecclesia were all rulers, and perhaps rulers only. The supervening commission to preach the gospel, which would necessarily select the elders best qualified for such a function, did not surely break up in terms the life-tenure of a residuary portion that remained to rule, and not to preach ; and the distinct ordination which afterward came to set apart the preaching elder from the people, from the world and from his ruling peers upon the bench could not withdraw from these the term of good behavior, because their function in the Church was mixed with other legitimate avocations of the present life. Rather, a life-tenure would more certainly remain to make trial of the good behavior, and make it better and best by reason of experience, and gospel institutions now to be served and directed, and longer intimacy with human nature in the contact of religion with temporal interests and things which perish in the using. To be in the world, though not of it, to be not taken out of the world by premature death or disability or sequestered use of talent in his service of any kind, is only an answer to the intercession of our Lord on behalf of his disciples.

The distinction made of late years between the office and its functions is hardly intelligible at all. What is an office without functions to be performed? There may be rotation of acting by turns and returning, as there anciently was among the classes of Levi in serving at the temple, and this agreed upon among themselves; but rotation which runs out indefinitely and looks for a restoration of place and time to suffrages unpledged and unpromised cannot be called rotation, but rather extinction of office, with propriety of speech—so far, at least,

as the personal functionary is concerned. The wheel of time-service in this way must evolve at length either a decadence of the office itself, as Dr. John Owen two centuries ago warned the independent churches of England it would do, or be a dead letter in the constitutional provision which allows it. The latter is its history in the Church of Scotland for eighteen years from 1560.

When the office of ruling elder was reinstated at Geneva by John Calvin, it was with notions of a theocratical constitution for that little republic in which this was done. Regarded as a municipal as well as an ecclesiastical officer, the ruling elder was to be chosen every year by the votes of a civil as well as of a religious constituency, blending the two in restoring the people to active power in the Church and the State alike. His disciple John Knox transported a similar miscellany from Geneva to Edinburgh, and improved upon the Swiss model in making it less municipal and more Levitical in the form of rotation by annual changes. He attempted to have a large number of elders selected to start with, and to have sections in the sequel to act alternately in true rotation, and the alternation to be determined either among themselves or by the people, or both. But the robust independence of Scotch Reformers began their traditional antagonism to the union of Church and State less than a score of years later in producing the Second Book of Discipline, which made the office of ruling elder distinctly and entirely spiritual, its tenure permanent and its personal functions active and continuous until superseded by death or by forfeiture. This was the standard which the commissioners from Scotland—Baillie, Douglas, Gillespie, Henderson and Rutherford—bore to the Assembly of

Divines at Westminster in the century following, and which, after long and exhaustive discussion there, was adopted with but slight modification and engrossed as the Directory of Presbyterianism throughout English Christendom.

Our American Assemblies copied that Directory, adopting as its formula in the "Form of Government" these words: "The offices of ruling elder and deacon are both perpetual, and cannot be laid aside at pleasure. No person can be divested of either office but by deposition." The continental Presbyterianism of Europe practically tends to the same consolidation, for the popular election becomes a formality of but little interest, and less attention, from time to time, and results with few exceptions, in a lifelong return of the same individuals chosen. The Church of Holland has, moreover, a grand consistory in which the functionary who has not been re-elected may sit in council with acting elders to deliberate and vote on certain measures of special importance, thus perpetuating the official tenure in a qualified way. The Reformed Church of France (Huguenot) adopted in their "Discipline" the seventh canon, thus: "The office of elders and deacons, as it is now in use among us, is not perpetual; yet because changes are not commodious they shall be exhorted to continue in their offices as long as they can, and they shall not lay them down without having first obtained leave from their churches."

The recent innovation upon our practice adopted by the Northern Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, that authorizes a particular church to choose the ruling elders for a triennial tenure only, probably will gravitate before long in the same way as in the older coun-

tries, because the prevailing reason for its adoption has been the newness of our country, the paucity of material for eldership—in new settlements especially—and the tentative process through which they pass in the coming and going so much of suitable persons for office. Doubtless the change was also a compromise of opposite opinions about the nature, need and warrant for this office itself in our economy of representation. But time will try it well. Fair experiment of time-service, which seems to have come like a patch on our constitution, will work out eventually, it is hoped, more homogeneity than ever on this pivotal point of Presbyterian polity. Especially, seeing the great majority of Presbyterian churches at the North, and all of them at the South, decline the experiment and cleave to the Westminster Directory in organization and practice, we may hope that the generations following will combine to eliminate the incongruous element from our system.

The periodical return of election for elders not only on the one hand works out a disparagement of rank, but on the other hand also an avoidance of discipline as an ordinance of God which is to be administered by a representative tribunal. The ruling elders, composing a great majority of officers on the bench in primary assemblies of judicature, if elected every three years by the people, naturally feel themselves to be amenable to the voters more than to their peers in the judicatory itself, and so the oversight of the Session in ordering the retirement of an unfaithful or an unacceptable elder according to the old provision of the "Form" (chap. xiii.) is made useless, and such discipline passes from the book to the ballot, and from a judicial process against which the aggrieved might appeal to a silent

conspiracy, it might be, from which there can be no redress or appeal, however undeserved and severely felt may be the condemnation of non-election for another period.

Repeated election is not required to make or to keep a true representative of the people, much less an officer over them, called of God, and least of all a judicial officer for God, as the elder is. It is enough to have been elected once by their untrammelled suffrage when he remains one of themselves in his occupation, affinities and sympathies; and in the very nature of its exercise the office to which they have chosen him keeps him intimately conversant with their wishes and influence. The pastor himself is a representative of the people, not only as he too is a ruler in the spiritual episcopacy of his charge, but also as he is a preacher by the great commission which at the Ascension came as a supreme behest upon the apostolic and catholic body of Christ. Yet this double representation in the bishop calls for only one election by the people, and surely his cocqual in one capacity should be settled in one election. Indeed, representative men grow up to be such among the people by habitation alone and by the tacit regard and deference rendered to them in the community for their wisdom, virtue and enterprise, and they are called representative in the common use of language, without formal candidacy or voting at all, though, of course, made official by suffrage and induction.

This acquiescent way of choosing representatives in silent assent has come down to us from a remote antiquity of our faith and is quite as old as work at the tabernacle in the Wilderness under the direction of Moses. The announcement of their leader that God

had called and qualified any one for any work was enough to engage the people in acceptance and obedience without a word of canvass or challenge on their part. When "Moses said unto the children of Israel, See, the Lord hath called by name Bezaleel," etc., "then wrought Bezaleel and Aholiab, and every wise-hearted man, in whom the Lord put wisdom and understanding to know how to work for the service of the sanctuary, according to all that the Lord commanded." Ex. xxxvi. 1. Such was the typical beginning of elections to the work of office in the Church: a nomination of the man, a description of his fitness, the kind of work, and, above all, the evidence of a divine call to it, were the whole of suffrage at first by way of silent assent. In subsequent ages of old the main ecclesiastical feature, a ruling eldership in every synagogue, was doubtless appointed with tokens of approbation by the unofficial members in diversified modes, according to the best authorities; but there is not a trace to be found in all Jewish antiquities of repeated elections for the continuance of the same individual elders. We hinge on that ecclesia, we copy from that model. The glories of Pentecost intervening stamp our New-Testament eldership with the image and superscription of gifts from God as the prime qualification for candidates. And is it because God has withdrawn all evidence of this that any particular church will reverse the nomination or try, and try again, to find it continued and safe? His gifts and calling are without repentance, and why should we make room for ours in vacating places by experiment?

It is also proper that an elder's judicial function should be commensurate in time with the duration of

discipline as it is properly administered in any given case. Difficult and important cases are often prolonged indefinitely, not only in the stages of process through which they are drawn, but in the patient waiting of elders to see fruits meet for repentance under the infliction of censure with a view to restore the offender to confidence and communion or to cast him away as a reprobate. The writer was familiar with one case in pastoral life which lasted over thirty years, and only the death of the offender ended the importunity with which he tried to regain a standing in fellowship just as often as a new member, whether bishop or elder, was added to the Session. His restoration at any time would have been discreditable to the communion, exchanging, as he did, one sin for another as age advanced and as the flagrancy of the original crime was forgotten. Yet a rotary eldership, so called, without tradition of memory to the contrary withstanding, would probably have rolled him in, whilst the old men of lifelong tenure in office who remembered the offence, the impenitence, the shifting hardness and the failure of conferences to convict of sin would still obstruct the readmission without more evidence of a saving change.

But church discipline is delicate, also, as it is chronic. To the tardiness of wise and prudent consideration and the indefinite prolongation of a charitable hope must be joined a secrecy which the reiteration of popular elections would spoil. The canvass for new elders must open up the proceedings of old elders and submit to a virtual arbitration by the people what is sacred to the bench, and cannot appeal to such a constituency for justification without annihilating that true confessional where a sinner gets the only absolution that man may dispense

in judicial form. Conscience will not stand the gaze of publicity without induration; judges will not bear the scrutiny which winnows their motives and unveils their conferences and compels them to spread the knowledge of offences in order to justify themselves and secure a continuance in office. Nor will the best men fitted for this high spiritual office allow themselves to be chosen or accept after an actual election if they are not allowed the benefit of experience assured to them in the tenure of eldership without returning to the people for a verdict before their crudities are cured or their service is accomplished.

There is, moreover, a comparative injustice to ruling elders in being made liable to loss of office by short terms of tenure. They are the local governors of the Church, adapted, we may presume, to the peculiar character and circumstances of the particular congregation where they rule, and, it might be, unfit for ruling anywhere else than the congregation where they belong. When dropped in the periodical return of election, they must abide there, divested of office probably for lifetime, without alternative and the possibility, perhaps, of ever knowing why the voters have set them aside. On the other hand, the teaching elder belongs to the whole Church. When superseded in one place, he goes to another with a plenitude of office which no mere election may vacate. For the power to rule is intrinsic to the ministry of the word, clothed as it is in authority for all the varieties of use and application—a sentence and a sword as well as a defence and an edification. Here, then, is obvious inequality of ruling office. Upon the one repeated election may bring irreparable dispossession; on the other it only shifts the officer to another field—it

may be of more advantage than ever—in the exercise of authority and influence. This upsets the foundation of our polity, and consistency would require two houses instead of one wherever the judicatories above a Session consist of equal numbers from the two classes of elders, bishops in the upper house and laymen—called "elders" —in the lower, and the whole denominated "convention" instead of "assembly."

Duties of Ruling Elders.

These are to be drawn mostly from the qualifications enumerated in Scripture, and much from the visible circumstances of the Church and notable exigences in her annals. Being the main office of her government under all dispensations, there must be some accommodation to changes in its nature—an elastic essence in its functions which resembles expediency alone. Having been patriarchal, Jewish, Christian, Catholic and Reformed by turns, and in such succession eternal as the principle of representation itself—without which no government of men could endure in Church or in State—the very occlusion with which it has had to run through mountain-obstructions even to this day shows how pervading and rebounding it is and the outcome of its destiny must be. The expansive usefulness of an eldership in government, however, must embrace both the teaching and the ruling officers of this name, each of them representative, and the latter immediately and especially so.

I. The first duty, therefore, of a ruling elder is to represent the people in membership by an example of performing in Christian duty what is enjoined by the word of God or by instructions of the Church derived

therefrom. He directs mainly by leading and rules mostly by submitting a pattern of obedience in himself to the doctrine of Christ and laws of a spiritual kingdom. He is to be the emphatic man in serving if he would be acknowledged as a chief man among the rulers at the sanctuary. To visit the sick, to comfort the afflicted, to receive the stranger, to admonish the wayward and to support the weak he is bound by the distinctively double obligation of charity and office. The indefinite impulse of the one and the definite force of the other combine to make a ruling elder the eminent Christian.

II. He is to be an intermediate teacher between the bishop and the people, apt to teach in a sphere of instruction which, though not exclusive, is practically wider than that of the pastor himself. It was a distinctive province of the elders in every synagogue of God while the temple-service endured in Israel to provide instruction of families,—children and youth in all the rudiments of religion, male and female, servants and handmaids—whilst the male head of the family would seek instruction from the priests at the temple, besides, only thrice in the year. The family institute accordingly descends as a trust to the bench of elders through all generations to enlighten it and cherish within it a safe administration of the family covenant by directing the parents to teach their children the fear of God and love of Christ, protecting this tuition from the communism which would toss it out and leave it in schools that would engross it all and set the natural sponsors free from sacred obligation. The Sunday-school, therefore, must be dominated mainly by ruling elders, who will either teach the classes themselves or appoint the

teachers they approve to do it rightly and with the help of sound and choice and adequate literature. Bible-classes, also, and choirs, and everything, in short, belonging to the province of catechetics in its range and import, should recognize the authority of elders and yield to the guidance of their consistorial assembly.

This plurality in private and social ministration of course includes the teaching elder, who is bishop, the first among equals in all the varieties of instruction, but it must not engross all his functions, for beyond theirs he preaches the gospel, administers the sacraments and earns his bread with exclusive franchise in exchanging spiritual things for carnal. Only in extremities of need like that imagined by Luther in supposition are the people authorized to make a ruling elder be their preacher without regular and distinct ordination. Yet less than that extremity would be sufficient to justify a certain approximation which is expressly mentioned in the Form of Government, ch. xxi., where either "elders or deacons" may perform a becoming service in "vacant congregations assembling for public worship." Even a partial vacancy in the pulpit, when the preacher is sick or absent, would fairly invite a ruling elder to lead the public worship in reading, prayer, praise and exhortation.

III. He holds in joint deliberation the keys of admission or exclusion in discriminating the worthiness of those who seek to enter into full communion and the unworthiness of those who forfeit the privilege by misdemeanor and impenitence. Investigations to be made in pursuance of this duty are specially the task of ruling elders in their peculiar episcopacy. In immediate contact with the world as they are, and penetrating on the walks of business, where all opportunities are available

to their insight, the mask of vice and proof of virtue, they are best qualified for judging human nature as it must be known to ensure a safe and righteous use of the keys—that opening and shutting in the house of Christ which is given to representative authorities in his name. Agents at the points of contact between the Church and the world are the best judges of both. Only an active participation in the average interests of both will be competent to balance fairly and distinguish wisely the characteristics of true Christianity in the present life. The "Reformed" branch of the great Reformation in Europe was known for its ethical purity throughout all Christendom by reason of the discipline which ruling elders conducted when, without this feature of polity, morals languished on every side, the best confessions were tarnished and the reproach of men hindered the progress and spread of faith.

IV. Ruling elders are the main judicial element of the Presbyterian system—the mitre as well as the keys resting on them to represent the people. They are primary courts or Sessions where they are in the aggregate a vast majority of officers to exercise original jurisdiction for the whole Church in judging wisely for the smaller part, and beyond these lower judicatories to constitute an equal representation in the higher and highest tribunals assembled, which hold appellate jurisdiction and consult for the widest interests of the visible Church on earth. It is their special duty, therefore, to study the constitution and the polity of the Church with constant care, and to teach the generations while they pass how to behave themselves in the house of God and how to prevent offences which may rise in the gradations of review or appeal to the greatest notoriety of scandal, and may

cause the weak to stumble and the enemy to blaspheme. The preponderating power in a Presbyterian system should certainly be well informed, and not be led blindly by any minority, however educated it may be. The vigor of common sense must be enlightened, the majority vote must be wisely directed, the responsibility of elders must be sensible in proportion to its weight and cultured well in proportion to its independence.

V. Their duty is to guard the pulpit also and advise the incumbent there with respectful heed in regard to the exercise even of his own power of order, without arrogating that power to themselves at all or subjecting it to the judicatory which they compose in great part numerically. In dispensing all the ordinances of a particular church they are to be counsellors and assistants of the pastor, upholding his hands, extending his work, devising ways and means and times and places for the ministrations belonging to his order. It is their duty, also, rather than the deacon's, to distribute the elements in sacramental communion to the worthy receivers, because they are presumed to know best who these are, having acted authoritatively in admitting them to fellowship and continuing a watchful care of them in that spiritual oversight which belongs to them jointly with the pastor.

This guardianship and supplementary assistance to the sacred desk constituted the original burden of an elder's office. For the pulpits at the beginning, in Old-Testament times, were all comparatively vacant and trusted in procuring supplies to the wisdom and faithfulness of ruling elders. Prophets, priests and Levites in general were the supply to be had for conducting

public worship and instruction at the synagogue. An individual fixedness of the pastoral tie belongs to the Christian era. Any one that came along "in the spirit and demonstration of a prophet" would be invited to hold forth in teaching or exhortation only by the elders. Levites were domiciled at convenient distances to be sent for by these elders when gifted strangers failed to offer themselves or to appear at the proper time. And this primitive agency remains a prerogative of ruling elders. When a particular church becomes vacant by the removal of a teaching elder from the bishop's place, the body of that joint authority which sits on the adjacent bench (as it used to be, in the literal sense, also) rise up to the task of obtaining another bishop. They are naturally and reasonably and prescriptively the "committee of supplies," and it is only disparagement to them and unseemly disorder for a congregation to raise a committee of the kind by promiscuous nomination of members who have no such official responsibility on their shoulders.

These main varieties of duty express the central importance of this feature in visible organization. Original, continued and perpetual as it is under a diversity of names when its functions are divided, but always the same denomination when these are united, we cannot overestimate the value of this office. Nor should we ever be in haste to organize a new church before finding some one or two at least of the people fairly qualified for the ruling eldership. A church may live without a bishop, but not without an elder. It may thrive in numbers and usefulness without stated preaching, but not without being led and regulated by a plurality of ruling elders.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE DEACONS.

KEEPING in view the continuity of the Church through both Testaments of revealed religion, and especially that visible ecclesia, or synagogue, which united in its ordinances of worship all that was sacred and spiritual in the tabernacle or temple of old, after Christ came in the flesh and the glorious ministration of the Spirit came to endow his disciples and apostles, we shall more definitely understand the process by which appellative words were made into proper and official names. And no one of these, we should observe, has had an application to persons generally so much as "deacon." The word *διάκονος*, both male and female in its gender, is given to every officer, from the supreme head himself to the lowest functionary in his kingdom. It is only when catalogued with other names of New-Testament office that it is defined and special. In its etymological sense it signifies a hasty and dust-covered messenger—one who runs on his errand with promptness and energy. It is explained, also, by the synonyms which come near its meaning. *Δοῦλος*, "a slave," is one of these, meaning a lower and less free obedience. *Θεράπων* is another, meaning attendance on a superior with free volition and kind intent. And still another is *Ὑπηρέτης*, one who does service to a superior, as a

rower does in obedience to a marine commander. All these different terms, expressing ministry, contribute their meaning more or less to the "deacon," added to the sense of urgent business in duty which this word itself imports.

But the question to be asked here is, "By what name in Greek does the diaconate of the Old-Testament ecclesia descend to the New-Testament vocabulary of office?" If we should venture *a priori* to answer, it would be an antithetic word to πρεσβύτεροι—namely, νεώτεροι, or νεανίσκοι. Both of these words for "young men" are used in performing deacon's work, according to the practice of the synagogue, in quickly removing from a religious meeting the dead bodies of Ananias and Sapphira. Acts v. It is worthy of special notice that the next chapter (Acts vi.) opens with a reorganization of the deacon's office in order to suit the fulness of time in gathering the Christian Church. The deaconship of the synagogue originally seems to have been local and narrow, yet various in duty, embracing all the menial employment of the sacristan, or sexton, in later times, along with the collection and disbursement of alms. Each synagogue had its own deacon or deacons, and of course expended the alms collected therein upon its own poor; and synagogues of the Dispersion were accustomed to send alms to Jerusalem for the festive occasions, besides the relief reserved for the poor of their own respective localities. Hence the surprise and vexation of the Hellenistic Jews at seeing their widows neglected at Jerusalem, where the overplus of their own alms had been carried for generations.

The apostles, having attracted a multitude of disciples to their ministry and hearing this murmur of the

strangers, at once comprehended the necessities of the situation—that an obligation rested on themselves to provide an impartial and adequate supply for the clamorous need. Yet such affairs were incompatible with their own supreme vocation to pray and to preach the gospel. They did not set aside the "young men" who had been so instantly at hand in the previous chapter to do a deacon's service, nor did they supersede, with any intimation, the beneficent machinery of previous time as now and henceforth unsuitable for the vast enlargement of the Church; but they called upon the discipled multitude around them to choose a band of seven commissioners, honest and spiritual and wise men, "whom we may appoint over this business"—that is, to superintend the arduous work of benevolence in that and all similar exigences of the time. These were not called, then or afterward, "deacons" at all, but "the seven;" six of them were Grecians by name, and all of them were above the level of mere almoners in retail and far beyond the minor activities of a deacon as inherited from the synagogue of old. Two at least of these phenomenal "seven" belonged to the ministry of gifts and became illustrious confessors in subsequent history—Philip, in his promotion to the work of a great evangelist, and Stephen, to die with angelic face and defensive eloquence on his lips, the proto-apologist and proto-martyr of Christendom.

Yet indirectly and really that superior quality of the seven who were chosen for an emergency at first, to superintend the work of deacons and assist as well as relieve the apostles in their momentous engagement of duty, came upon the office of deacon with ennobling effect—not to make them preachers, for the main reason

of the appointment was that the apostles might give themselves exclusively to that commission along with prayer; not to be ranked, perhaps, on any plane of office in the ministry of orders, teaching, ruling or serving; for the examples we have mentioned above would indicate a transitory exercise of preternatural gifts which belonged to that age alone. This was the opinion of Chrysostom. The solemnity of setting them apart with prayer and the laying on of hands would, of course, identify them to some extent with the order of deacons over which they were appointed to look and act as directors for the time being. The impress of that incidental direction would remain to dignify the deacon, making the generic name an honorable designation fit for any office, however exalted. And the stamp of this reorganized importance may be seen perpetually afterward, in the development of this office by the pastoral Epistles of inspiration, as "holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience," and also by the subsequent course of history, in separating from a deaconship the cares of a sexton and the humble occupations of a sub-deacon.

Notwithstanding all this elevation and progress of the office, however, it lingered among the associations of minor duty. Even above middle age of life was chosen, as well as youth, and "deacons" were to be "proved" first, and they might be husbands and fathers and must be "grave" as elders in character and demeanor. They were *minor* officials in grade, and by the primitive writers, as we have seen, were often called Levites, on account of a miscellaneous employment in sacred things, and the miscellany of years in age. We have in 1 Pet. v. 5 a striking antithesis between elder and deacon carried on, though partially hidden by the authorized translation:

"Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder." This "younger" cannot mean the people, in distinction from their officers, else the clause immediately subjoined ("Yea, all of you be subject one to another") would be tautology. The appellatives "younger" and "young men" were undoubtedly tropical of minor office in the old ecclesia. Our Lord himself, in Luke xxii. 26, has indicated this: "He that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger." The ὁμείζων in this clause we see interpreted in the next clause by the ὁ ἡγούμενος, which is a familiar name for the higher office of the Church—"and he that is chief, as he that doth serve."

In this way the contention between Dr. Mosheim and Dr. Miller may be composed without an error on either side. It is obviously credible to say with the former that the record in the first verses of Acts vi. is that of an addition of overseers, at least, to an order of office already existing; and to say, with the latter, it is the first institution of this office in the Christian Church. Instead of being the origination, absolutely, it is a reconstruction, of the deaconship on a pressing occasion by the appointment of popular and gifted men to superintend the work of deacons and to elevate their office above the menial activities of the past to a dignity of benevolence proportioned to the grand development of need in the Christian Church. Herein, also, we have an interesting parallel to the position already suggested respecting elders in the Christian economy as they were elevated to the apostolic plane of teaching and preaching the gospel —that is, all that were gifted and called to this work— by the great commission devolved on them entirely as the witnessing errand of the apostles ended. As the great minor office of the Church was exalted in service

at the beginning of gospel promulgation by apostolic men, so the great major office of our ecclesia, under all dispensations, was widened at length for all the world over by the commission of elders innumerable to preach as well as to rule at the demise of original and inspired witnesses for Christ.

Let us, therefore, contemplate more closely the nature of this office from the standpoint which was made at the renovation over which presided "the seven" by the motion of apostles and the election by disciples, confirmed with the solemnity of ordination. We cannot, of course, enter into the detail of previous work, which was much the same in the care and management of sacred things among all the religions of history, whether true or false. The custody, the handling, the robing, the providing, the purchasing, the lighting, the cleaning, the arranging, the carrying of any consecrated things that are tangible,—all these have been distributed in a great variety of ways, and to a great variety of subordinate persons, ever since "the seven" took charge of the diaconate and made it a spiritual office like that of the eldership. Now, more than ever, the giving of one's substance to the Lord and alms to the poor for the Lord's sake is an act of worship, a spiritual sacrifice acceptable to him. The sublime spirit of a Stephen or a Philip is the heritage of our deacons; and "I am among you as one that serveth," said He who "hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS." Yet the scope of spiritual service belonging to this minor office in the Church must not be considered as either inchoate or indefinite: it is a definitively perfect office.

Certainly a license to preach without permission to

dispense the sacraments, which the novitiate hastens to leave as a mere probation for the ministry, should not be called the function of a deacon. Three orders in the ministry when the first and the second are but steps to the third and highest in the aspirations of a candidate are not three, but one in the light of actuality and common sense. As well might we claim three orders of the ministry in matriculation at a theological seminary as the first, license to preach as the second and ordination to the office of our bishop as the third in a Presbyterian system. God has not so appointed the offices pertaining to his everlasting gospel. These are all perpetual, not one of them inchoate, as a lower step is for a higher, not one of them too narrow for an angel's operation, when the Head over all deigned to become a deacon—"minister of the circumcision." It is the distinctive sublimity of office in the Church of God to repress man's ambition, to forestall "emulations," that work of the flesh, and make the lowest incumbent satisfied with his lot and contented to magnify the office with which he is already invested.

As the office of deacon is not inchoation or a beginning merely, so also it is not vague or indefinite as to its duties, however spiritual it has now become and freed from the menial minuteness with which it was anciently encumbered. The negative side of its definiteness appears in the sixteenth canon of the Council at Constantinople (A. D. 680): "The Scripture deacons are no other than overseers of the poor, and this is the opinion of the Fathers." These Fathers were Polycarp, Hermas, Origen, Cyprian, Eusebius, Ambrose, Jerome, Chrysostom and Sozomon the historian, followed to the Reformation and after it by the Waldenses, Wickliffe, Tyndal, Lam-

bert, the Lutheran, Swiss, French and Holland churches; and, without citing a long list of Anglican authorities, by the venerated American bishop White of Philadelphia, who wrote thus: "All I contend for is that at the first institution of the order there could have been no difference between them and laymen in regard to the teaching of the word and the administering of the sacraments."

The positive side of its definite nature is expressed comprehensively in the phrase *διακονεῖν τραπέζαις*, to "serve tables." The metonymy or figurative sense of this expression after "the seven" superintendents in the ministry of gifts took the charge of this department off the hands of the apostles in its new plenitude of care, and over the diversified concern of an old diaconate, may be extended almost indefinitely. The whole interest of Christian benevolence, in its object, system, method, occasion, motive, amount, collection and disbursement, are legitimate varieties in the scope of this minor office. And in proportion as the visible Church is prospered in the world by the accession of numbers, by the accumulation of wealth and by the applications of misery from the poor, the sick, the unfortunate, the perishing, at home or abroad, we have the province enlarged of a deacon's functions. In fact, the prodigious expansion of finance in the vantage and economies of the present age would seem to uplift this office to a practical mastery of management in directing the Church as well as the State. The deaconship, moreover, is not an agency or instrument merely, but an office also, and therefore essentially authoritative to a certain extent, though not self-adjusting.

In place of "the seven" from the ministry of gifts,

and of the apostles also from the immediate commission of the Master, we have perpetually the elders, teaching and ruling, to superintend the functional work of deacons; and as the original superintendence came at once to relieve the office of menial drudgery and exalt it more to the sphere of spiritual function, so it is competent to the assembly of elders, teaching and ruling, to discriminate in the assignment of task to this minor office against the secularization of the latter in too much business of building and banking, just as far as it appears to be safe in keeping or disposing of temporal estate. Hence the modern device of trusteeship, to constitute a point of contact between the Church and the State—a creation of the latter sought and accepted by the former to secure protection, convenience and facility of legal transactions. Severed, however, in this way from overmuch burden of carnal things, the deaconship should not relinquish care and acquiesce in such a method of expediency without some active representation; and the higher directory is in fault when it allows a body of secular men, some or all of whom may be non-communicants within, to be incorporated and to act without the counsel and presence of deacons, more or less, to assist them, or in allowing their edifice of worship to be used for any purpose without express permission from the elders. The interaction of elders and deacons may thus be guided with mutual edification to themselves and profit to the people. The superintendence must not be dictatorial nor the service a slavery: the independence of office at the lower degree is the same as that of the higher degree. The deacons should report to the elders at stated times their proceedings, and the latter should consider well the report, approving or disapprov-

ing, but not annulling, what has been done. Any issue made upon the validity of transaction itself should be carried to a higher tribunal of representation.

These two offices should be kept for ever distinct from each other, notwithstanding the approximation of one to the other in spiritual function since the days of Stephen and Philip. Powers of government should always be kept in a balance. When one outweighs the other, disorder comes; and when one absorbs the other, despotism comes. A difference of function is most useful when it makes a reciprocal check of administration; and it is always good to have concurrence of judgment between two bodies—practically a greater force than unanimity in one body, however massive this may be in agreement. Hence the original usage in the Reformed Church of Scotland, to gather elders and deacons together in council at that conjuncture when union was strength in every way and lords of the laity required it, could not continue long without making an amalgam of both offices which it required many generations after to solve and separate with intelligible difference. So in the first organization of elderships in this country, the sparse and scanty supply of suitable men for each, and the confused apprehension of both offices at first, made the American churches very slow to discern the difference, and slower still to feel the need of a distinct office in the deacon for the full equipment of a church. It was only in the last generation that repeated injunctions of the General Assembly could persuade the people to choose deacons and elders both as a common formation distinctly made; and even yet many churches may be found without this development of the two, most of them being jealous of innovation, and of much office,

having only elders in the name, and some of them only "deacons," in their familiar parlance.

The need of having both these offices distinctly organized in every particular church may be urged—

1. Because it is the scriptural pattern of a complete church. The synagogue at Nazareth where our Lord "had been brought up"—the church that he attended from his youth, "as his custom was"—incidentally furnished a form of this completeness, on the occasion of his first preaching in Galilee. Luke iv. 20. Permission was given to him by the ruling elders to read and speak in that sanctuary. And there was "delivered unto him the book," as "he stood up for to read;" and after he had read what he opened the book to find, "he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister and sat down." The "minister" is called in the original *τῷ ὑπηρέτῃ*, which, as we have already noticed, is a synonym for *διάκονος*—"deacon." The minuteness of these minor incidents makes the picture only the more complete. Service must be impersonated, as well as ruling and teaching, distinctly; and if it must be thus complete in the meeting, how much more must it be so in the varied responsibilities of movement and transaction pertaining to a visible church! Material equipment in persons must belong alike to the house, the work, the road and the destination of incarnate Christianity.

2. Merging one of these offices in the other must lead to confused apprehension of either and of both. When the office of deacon became the favorite of bishops in the earlier development of prelacy, with the purpose of neutralizing and abolishing a ruling eldership for its natural resistance to episcopal ambition and usurpation, utter confusion followed in history and in councils at

every attempt to define the province of the surviving office, that of elder being put away out of sight. As we descend through mist and change toward the darkness of mediæval ages, we find the office of deacon made the most obscure, perplexed and inconsistent office that was ever instituted by either Church or State. Naturally enough, the deacon was everything to the bishop himself, now that he had removed the intermediate elder and there was no longer a bench between his chair and the standing creatures of his power called by Jerome "servitos." One writes that they were "eyes and ears, heart and mouth, soul and perception, to the bishop," and he was everything to them. They could even preach and baptize when he bade them and sent the chrism to their hands. They could represent him in any council as proxy, and yet were not allowed to deliberate and vote unless in provincial councils, where they sat as scribes and disputants. They could enrich themselves and rise in pride and social standing to the highest rank of influence, and yet they were not permitted to sit in the presence of a presbyter, but had still to stand and wait in token of the original distinction. They could carry the sacramental elements to the people, present or absent, but not at all to the presbyter, because they were not authorized to consecrate them. Then fantastic varieties were made in their vestments, their grades, numbers, age and classes: we read of archdeacons and subdeacons and cardinal deacons and regionary deacons and stationary deacons and testimonial deacons. This last variety were so called because they lived with the bishop so intimately and constantly that they could be witnesses to the world that he was a pure man in private life. And of course he

was to be reciprocally witness for them after they were forbidden to marry, notwithstanding the canonical directions of the apostle Paul respecting the deacon's married life.

Happily, the converse merging of the deacon's office in that of the ruling elder which has been allowed so much in Presbyterian churches cannot be chargeable, as yet, with similar deflection of the elder's office and character, but the tendency is dangerous to the vital interest and the wisely balanced equities of our system. It has already stamped a backwardness upon churches mixed in this way along that path of progress which is the glory of this age—giving freely and systematically of what God has given to us of worldly substance for the spread of the gospel and the establishment of its institutions. A deaconship especially devoted to the work of beneficence, missions and education, as well as alms for the poor and asylums for the suffering, must be single, with its badge or stole on the left shoulder and its right arm free from trammel to sustain the activities of a kingdom which has come, and is coming more fully, as a benediction to the world. It must be acknowledged that benevolent contributions languish wherever there is no distinct board of deacons to stimulate them and manage them with special care. "Orthodox and stingy" is the brand upon churches of the Presbyterian family which have all sorts of elders and no sort of deacons.

3. One of these offices will be enough to engross the time and energy of a man who is engaged in the proper avocations of life, which bring that contact and familiarity with the world which both offices require in order to administer them successfully and wisely. The multiform shapes of charity must be studied along with the

norm and principle and scope of this grace given in God's word. The resources in ways and means must be scanned and computed, the characters of both benefactors and beneficiaries must be found out, the fields of destitution and misery must be contemplated, the proportion of shares in all varieties of distribution must be adjusted fairly; and, above all, the spiritual elevation of church-work, as it was ordered when the charisms of Pentecost were called for to qualify "the seven" ordained to the oversight of this department—"full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom,"—all these require time and care which can hardly be afforded by the industries of ordinary livelihood, much less by the occupations of any other office besides.

On the other hand, the office of ruling elder at its position in the system, exercising an oversight of the deaconship, far enough to judge of its wisdom and fidelity in the way of review without abating its autonomy, must, of course, attain much of the same furniture in facts and information. All this, added to the other business of jurisdiction and similar engagements in the world to provide things honest in the sight of all men, must be to him an overcharge which is incompatible with attention to the details of collection and of distribution.

4. Even if the two could be compounded without perverting or abating either, it would be inexpedient for the welfare of the church to dispense with practical distinction. As long as she has both old and young in her membership she must have over them both the offices which crystallize these adjectives in technical names. And it is highly expedient on other accounts to have many of the members of the church in office: it ani-

mates, invigorates and guards the incumbents themselves. The affairs of the church are more their own personal business. Her interests are more an active concernment. They prize more the privilege of all her ordinances and pray more for her prosperity and ascertain more accurately the need and measure and force of all her institutions. When the number of male members cannot afford a bench of ruling elders and a board of deacons both, the former must have the precedence in organization, as the older precedes the younger in authority; but in such cases the pastor, and not the bench of elders, should perform a deacon's duty. The apostles themselves handled it in the first exigence until the accession of membership in a multitude would furnish the right men for deacons and the superintendence of them with new inspiration. And in this alternative there would be less confusion of office and less hazard of a permanent omission, because the people would be sooner prompted to relieve the pastor of excessive toil and distracting care. Of course it is not meant here that offices should be multiplied at the pleasure of the church as an expedient for exercising the variety of gifts which men may fancy valuable in promoting her welfare. God only makes the offices and endows the functionaries with proper gifts, and he has made only two in the record of his will named and greeted by the apostle Paul in Phil. i. 1—"bishops and deacons."

5. If we are not authorized to make offices on the score of expediency in our own judgment, much less are we justified in transferring the functions of any sacred office to a civil office because the latter is one peculiar to Christian civilization—such as overseers of the poor, whom Christians are taxed to support, and are too often

substituting for church deacons in the stress of consciences that are concerned only somewhat for the distribution of alms. A Christian people should be specially cautioned against falling into such a snare. It is not benevolence; it is not obedience; it is not spiritual either in motive or outcome.

(1) Overseers of the poor in a civil community cannot perform the duties of a Christian deacon. The most deserving penury is hardly ever benefited by the State, because it shrinks instinctively from making known its misery. There is often a reduction to poverty of those who were once in ease and affluence, and, coming down to want with all their intelligence and sensibilities made morbid by the change, they would rather die than be gazed at in the ranks of public pauperism. There is also the independence of lowly and honest thrift, which would endure any privation or pinching of want rather than feel the obligations of relief without being able to repay it. There must be, therefore, a special order of spiritual officers who are fitted for a task so delicate in distribution, whose intercourse within the church will enable them to find out the need which is never obtrusive and to hear the whispers of that fainting penury which will not clamor—men of heart and tender sensibility whom the grace and compassion of Jesus, combining with their native and sanctified endowments, qualify for this work of temporal mercy.

(2) Even if our civil guardians of the poor were competent, they ought not to undertake a work so spiritual in its nature. Alms of the State are not religious; the relief and support of the poor is matter of policy alone. Utilitarian only in the prevention of crime, the relief of private habitations from beggary at the doors, the sani-

tary precaution against disease which neglected poverty might occasion,—all these qualities of civil distribution to want, however laudable, are but carnal in comparison with the charity that is born of God in his kingdom of grace. Where taxes begin charity ceases. Were Christians contented with the care bestowed by secular asylums, they would soon part with the life and power of this greatest of graces and cease to feel that it is indeed a grace of the Spirit and a distinguished glory of the gospel; and, being parted from this its life-spring, it would die, and enlightened policy itself would eventually cease to bless the community with liberal or effective provisions for the poor.

(3) The Church is a debtor to the State in the obligation she acknowledges to cherish her own poor in her own way. It is in the charter she has from her Founder: "The poor ye have with you always." It is her ancient characteristic, her claim, her boast, even in the times and places of her utmost degeneracy. And the State, therefore, has equitable reason to construe an assumpsit on her part in the hands of her deacons. Moral obliquity, if not legal also, deforms her wherever this duty is neglected or ignored. She is a family bound together by the nearest and dearest of ties. Her sympathies within are likened to a fellow-feeling within us among the members of the same body. If it would be reckoned justly a disgrace for any private family to surrender an inmate to the poorhouse while there is a possibility of maintaining him at home, how much more dishonest must it be for this chosen and peculiar family to separate any poor member to the heartless charity of a civil establishment while there is any ability or any deacon to direct it by his watchful sensibilities and appointed ministry for

the support of poverty found within the gates of our sanctuary!

Orphanage as well as poverty is a spiritual charge to the ministrations of a deacon. Sponsorial in the family covenant itself, he may stand for the child that is left without a parent in the administration of baptism, and with Abrahamic faith may vouch for its nursing and education. The oversight ensuing allies him closely to the elders, both teaching and ruling, in the exercise of his peculiar functions. Yet in all these duties of a spiritual nature he is subject rightly to the control of an eldership, and only in the distribution of alms and goods to the poor is he self-controlled and exclusive in authority, bound only to hear the advice of elders. The progress of benevolence in these last times would enlarge the spiritual sphere of a deacon's work, fain to add analogies to the literal narrowness of his functions in Presbytery, such as money collected and given wherever the gospel is preached to the poor; money sent outside of the Church to prepare the way for other direct ministrations on her errand; money for the spiritual instruction as well as support of widows and orphans. How many ministers of the word who toil among the rich as well as among the poor churches, for a pittance of present recompense, would feel their penury but little inconvenience if they knew well that the care of their families in widowhood and orphanage would be regarded by surviving ministers of another order among the same people as a sacred task dear as supporting the gospel itself? Because the Middle Ages went too far in putting the deacon to everything, the modern ages should not err in the constriction of an opposite extreme. There is room and there is need for expansion.

The Deaconess.

The Christian diaconate of which we have spoken has already virtually attained the expansion to which it is entitled in the great activity and service of Christian woman beyond the distribution of alms at home and beyond the frontier of Christian civilization and beyond the setting sun, till the whole earth is girdled with her beneficence in missions of the Church. We should now give her a normal recognition and an official place in our system. God has given her the name of "deacon"—which in the original is both male and female—and the world is witnessing how well she deserves it. True, it is not authority she seeks in doing good, and a formal investiture with office may even be shunned by the delicacy of her nature; but power in the Church should always be defined in a formal constitution, especially when it grows and waxes exceedingly and earns in its progress the suffrage and the plaudit of the people.

No chapter in the Bible touches the deacon's office with that breadth and beauty which the oversight of "the seven" imparted so much as the sixteenth of Romans. Ver. 1: "I commend unto you Phœbe our sister, which is a servant (deaconess) of the church which is at Cenchrea;" ver. 3: "Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus;" ver. 6: "Greet Mary, who bestowed much labor on us;" ver. 12: "Salute Tryphena and Tryphosa, who labor in the Lord." The cluster of salutations here at the end of this grand Epistle so replete with climax and the marrow of gospel truth and century-plants of logic is the flower that surmounts it, and the letter is said to have been carried from Corinth

to Rome by the first-named deaconess herself. The errand of Phœbe to Rome was evidently official. Ver. 2: "That ye receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you; for she hath been a succorer of many and of myself also." "For" in this latter clause interprets the "business" which took her to Rome—the continuance of that official beneficence which Paul and many others had shared; so, also, does the mention of a particular church, "Cenchrea," of which she was a "servant," indicating that her special business at Rome must have been the interest of that church—probably in the way of collecting funds where opulent Christians were to be found and the treasures of the world were so much accumulated. On any other business, of a personal or a social nature, she would have been commended as a "servant of the Lord" in the usual form of Christian commendation.

The next verse brings to view a similar office and order at Rome itself: "Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus." Helpers have an official name in the catalogue of gifts to the primitive Church (1 Cor. xii. 28: ἀντιλήψεις—"helps"); and when we recall the fact that the original seven set over the diaconate were evidently gifted with the charisms of apostolic time, though attached to a ministry of permanent order for an occasion as auxiliary to the apostolic service, we may well believe that the term "helpers" among godly women was official as well as appellative in signification. And here we have another evidence of enlargement and elevation for the order of deacon and deaconess. Besides the five particular forms of ministration derived from the old economy and assigned by the early Fathers

to the deaconess of the new—care of the poor, the sick, the stranger, the widow and the orphan—they were helpers of apostles, whose mission was extensive as the globe; they were sisters of mercy to the martyrs whom no male deacon could reach without the peril of life; they were like both the confessor Philip and the martyr Stephen in that kind of signal service which all history commemorates. Pliny wrote to Trajan at the beginning of the second century that he had subjected women to the torture in persecution that he might extort confession: "Ex duabus ancillis quæ ministræ dicebantur." Evidently one of these nouns, *ancilla*, is the common designation of handmaid, and the other, *ministra*, the official name of a female servant. And this term translates the Greek *διάκονος* in patristic Latin.

It is hard to compress within proper limits the concurrence of our best commentators, Lutheran and Calvinistic, on this point—the official sense given to the service of Phœbe. Calvin says: "He commends to them Phœbe, to whom he gave this epistle to be brought to them; and in the first place he commends her on account of her office, for she performed a most honorable and a most holy function in the church. . . . As, then, she was a deaconess—*ministra*—of the Cenchrean church, he bids that on that account she should be received in the Lord; we ought surely to regard and especially to love and honor those who perform a public office in the Church." From John Calvin to Charles Hodge, inclusively, we have a singular succession of learned and illustrious men affirming the official meaning of "deaconess" in its application to Phœbe. Some of these are Beza, Van Mästricht, MacKnight, Bingham, Suicer, Schleusner, Parkhurst, Kitto, Brown, and

last—not least, by any means—Thomas Chalmers of Scotland: "Here too we are presented with another most useful indication — the employment of female agency, under the eye and with the sanction of an apostle, in the business of a church. It is well to have inspired authority for a practice too little known and too little proceeded on in modern times. Phœbe belonged to the order of deaconesses, in which capacity she had been the helper of many, including Paul himself. Like the women in the Gospels who waited on our Saviour, she may have ministered to them of her substance, though there can be little doubt that, as the holder of an official station in the church, she ministered to them of her service also."

The word of God, however, does not give a name to any office or officer without also giving the character of qualifications required for the exercise of its functions. He not only inspires the word, male and female —*διάκονος*—but he plainly signifies what the woman as well as the man must be to magnify the office. So we read in 1 Tim. iii. 11: "Even so must *their* wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things." Here, however, the Authorized Version is at fault, and the recent Revision is decidedly better: "Women in like manner must be grave, not slanderers, temperate, faithful in all things." This follows the Vulgate, *mulieres similiter*, and is nearer to the original; for, though *γυναῖκας* may mean "wives," its general meaning is women as antithetical to men, whether married or unmarried. And the connection here is obviously women of the diaconate rather than of the house, with husband and children, domestic proprieties mentioned in the next verse being expressly assigned to the male deacon.

Doubtless the wives of deacons were often in the same office, but in this passage "their" does not belong to the sense and is not in the original. It is only female deacons as a distinct variety in the office, enumerated here for the purpose of showing their distinctly similar and proper characteristics.

An official name being ascertained, and a list of proper qualifications and becoming character being also distinctly revealed, the next question to be settled is the separate organization of deaconesses in the regular scheme of church offices. An eleemosynary institute of some kind, with its roll of members, conditions of admission, rules of order, duties prescribed, privileges forfeited, etc., would seem to be the natural formation of such a guild; and any degree of intimation or color of fact in sacred history which makes complete the postulates of office already noticed should settle the claim we make for woman's office and give it place and habitation. If we had no name for office which is both male and female in the original, and if we had no corresponding functions of an official nature described in Scripture, and no list of qualifications detailed, and no crowd of consecrated women eulogized by the great apostle for their functional aid in his labor and succor in his misery, then indeed the probability would be against our plea when we allege against Neander an institution of deaconesses rather than a poorhouse for widows in the concise directions of 1 Tim. v. 3–16.

The averment that Phœbe was a deaconess approved and commended by the apostle Paul, and the greeting sent to others in other places for busy and faithful occupation in the same way, may obviously dispense with a formal account of the institution, either as

derived from the old economy or as constructed again under the new. This female deaconship, being supplementary in its nature, needs no more than allusion or indirect mention to signify its corporate existence. Such implication is found in the passage cited above. Beginning with the subject of "widows," always cherished by the Church under both dispensations, the apostle writes (ver. 3), "Honor widows that are widows indeed." The proper attention to these and the equitable supply of their need were the occasion, we have seen (Acts vi.), of rehabilitating a deaconship at the beginning of the gospel, when the seven were "appointed over this business" and selected with solemnity of procedure from the ministry of gifts then at work with the apostles. And, as these were subsequently identified with deacons themselves because of the trust in direction of that order, so the female deacons were afterward identified with widows because of the original and special trust confided to this order, according to the Scriptures. This apparent confusion of widows dependent with widows superintending them—the governed with the governesses themselves—must be discerned with close attention, or this remarkable text (1 Tim. v. 3) will be inexplicable.

All New-Testament offices are free from prescription of age as it was made in the temple-service of old—not in the synagogue, after which our ecclesia has been modelled. When we read, therefore, "Let not a widow be taken into the number under threescore years old," we interpret fairly that maturity of mind and the tenderness of pity and ripeness of piety becoming the office of a deaconess henceforth are required by this typical form in the literal threescore prescribed at the origin of a female diaconate. Certainly, this expression cannot be

taken as a limitation to the number of beneficiaries admitted to the charities of a public asylum. Even the civic provision for the poor would never so hamper applications for admittance, and we cannot for a moment suppose that Christian benevolence, aglow even in its cradle, would devise a restriction so exclusive and unreasonable; for the childless widow and the young widow with children in their childhood, too young to provide for her, must be regarded in every age as ordinarily the most needy and dependent of widows. In this very connection the apostle says: "If any widow have children or nephews let them learn first to shew piety (kindness) at home, and to requite their parents." If, therefore, the widow, at any age, who has neither child nor nephew to provide for her at a home of her own makes application to the home provided by the Church for the poor, she must not be refused because she is less than "threescore years old." "Taken into the number," then, must mean some other kind of number than the inmates of charitable subsistence at a home supported by the alms of the Church.

The word *καταλεγέσθω*, used only here and translated "taken into the number," means in classical use enrolment of the most particular kind, picking out from a general register, civil or military, a few in detail for special duty—the sense given to this word by Erasmus, Beza and many others. The detail here enjoined cannot, on the principles of common charity and common sense, refer to the widows received for support in their destitution, but to those who administer and superintend the support afforded; and if those admitted into the catalogue of overseers and managers be widows at all, they must be persons of experience threescore years old,

whose qualifications for such a ministry must have been well tested: "Well reported of for good works; if she have brought up children, if she have lodged strangers, if she have washed the saints' feet, if she have relieved the afflicted, if she have diligently followed every good work." In short, such a person could not herself be a dependent pauper; if she were, the "brought-up children" would be required, according to the context of this quotation, to support her in private homes. But the whole description of her character is that of a benefactress who had enjoyed leisure and means for doing good to others in hospitality and condescending kindness to the saints and the relief of affliction, and all this done "diligently," as if she had been already given wholly to the dispensing of charity.

Precisely such a widow, desiring, withal, to enter the official list of deaconesses, could not be found—one among a thousand—in any generation; and even if she could be, she would be too old to last long in the work of distribution. "Murmuring" would soon be heard again through all the wards of an asylum that "widows were neglected in the daily ministration," and the aged overseers themselves—exceedingly few in number, and inadequate, with the best of health, to manage and supply the crowd of needy ones within—must have the list enlarged and the activities of younger age enrolled to attend the weakness of old age in the oversight as well as in a throng of poverty admitted to the institution. Hence the necessity of a figurative sense to the requirement of sixty years in age for a fellowship of care "over this business." With the exception of Tertullian, all the early Fathers who adverted to the subject of this office agreed in divesting of its literalism the original

injunction, fairly construing it to signify sound judgment, thoughtful concern, prudence and practical wisdom, as well as tried fidelity in qualifying for the office of deaconess. This liberal interpretation greatly increased the diaconate of women, and obtained currency, perhaps, even before the demise of Paul himself; for early in the second century Ignatius wrote to his church at Antioch, "Salute the deaconesses in Christ Jesus." The home for destitute widows had now become but one department of their helpfulness. The centralization with which their work had begun was broken up and diffused, and their function, like "the alabaster box of very precious ointment," followed the gospel in the spread thereof: "Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her." Thus it is that Jesus embalms the good work of woman.

Let us beware of the grudging "indignation" with which his disciples said, "To what purpose is this waste? For this ointment might have been sold for much and given to the poor." Is there now no memorial of benefaction to the poor in the distinctive work of woman, inasmuch as if she does it to the least of these she does it to the Saviour himself? Should not the great apostle of the Gentiles be credited with similar dedication in the monumental pattern he has drawn of the good women's office at the widows' home? The compact abruptness of his style in making transitions and leaving us to make distinctions where he has dropped his massive thought and given his comprehensive directions must not be made a jumble in our haste to simplify conclusions. We have in the text now

before us a very composite account of eleemosynary foundations at the first in primitive Christianity, and we have attempted to unravel a thread of qualification for the oversight by such functionaries as have charge of the female poor; but we are just here confronted with an array of modern literature which would relegate to chaos the effort of explanation and insist that the whole context intends to signify only the widows who are to be supported by the public charity of the Church. Even the richest and the best, the well-to-do and the most helpless of widows are alike to be supported when they have no kinsfolk to support them with private benevolence. Yet we are told in that word which is translated by the phrase "taken into the number" that there must be a careful picking and choosing of this number, which is proper in the choice of officers to superintend the charity, but simply absurd in the nature of charity as to the objects of relief and support, and entirely inconsistent with a wholesale consignment to the almshouse of the persons described in the passage. The literal limitation described in the ninth and tenth verses would confine the choice of deaconesses to a very few persons fitted for the ministration; but if it be applied to the indigent themselves received and supported, there would be nullification of the whole scheme and design of a charitable provision. The entire description of the widow entitled to "be taken into the number" selects the directrix alone, and excludes from this number the directed and the fit beneficiaries.

Besides, the exclusion mentioned in the eleventh verse —"the younger widows refuse"—aggravates the voidance with a cruel disparagement of the lone childless widow who has had no experience, nor means for doing

good to others, nor opportunities for hospitality, nor near of kin to depend on, and all the more needing to be admitted, instructed and guided, as well as fed and clothed, by the common charities of the faithful. The reason for such a refusal—because "they will marry" and "have damnation, because they have cast off their first faith"—is a dire indignity and an absurd injustice also if we are to understand the refusal to mean as a beneficiary seeking support in the almshouse; for the probability of her being married again would only suggest a speedy relief to the funds provided for the support of a destitute community. Still more atrocious in such a case are the words "having damnation"—that is, "condemnation"—"because they have cast off their first faith." In the same connection we read, "I will, therefore, that the younger women marry." He cannot mean that he wills their "damnation" in being married again or violating any faith in having been entered as paupers. Everything in such language of the apostle is explicable only on the hypothesis of an instituted order being the main drift of these verses, into which the younger widow could not be admitted then lest another marriage would interrupt her usefulness in office and bring condemnation on herself and the order also for mutability in vows and dereliction of engagement on which the giving of charity had relied.

Thus we have an official name, official qualifications and official devotement fairly given by Holy Scripture for the office of deaconess in the Church wherever and whenever God gives the gift on which it is founded. It is for us to interpret the gift when it comes, and the rule of this interpretation is furnished by God's own word. The ministry of gifts was called to touch the old di-

aconate with new life and elevation at a miraculous time in the days of Philip and Stephen. The greater part of the elevation then bestowed consisted, manifestly, in the endowment of sainted women. Last at the cross and first at the tomb of our exalted Saviour, he did not forget to exalt them also in the redemption when he sent the Comforter, as he had promised—the Holy Ghost, in the plenitude of gifts and graces—on all that waited: "And on my servants and on my handmaidens, I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy."

"Those days" are commensurate with the ministration of the Spirit, and this continues until this day. We may not now see "wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath," for we do not need to see them, but we see culture by the Spirit, which was only anticipated by the marvels of Pentecost as preternatural signs of what is coming in progress of time and always followed by the realization that abides. Gifts for Phœbe's "business" and for Priscilla's "helping" and for Tryphena's "labor" still remain, and these are now as much the fruit of the Spirit as they were when Stephen died. The Spirit who "dwelleth in us and shall be with us" delights in the culture which revives them and continues them, for this culture is his own and will endure in the Church in proportion to the slowness of their growth and development.

But here we may be challenged for an explanation of their disappearance in the visible Church within the first thousand years of their existence. We may briefly answer, Because the glory had departed and the culture of woman was reversed by apostasy in the Church itself. Pure Christianity alone elevates woman and endows her

with adequate gifts for office in the Church, and the slightest alloy of superstition contracts the sensibilities of her nature. Charity is broad, and superstition is narrow.

(1) The first cause of decay and discontinuance, therefore, in the female diaconate was the abatement of her own qualifications by reason of spiritual decline. With the return of Jewish *pasch* and mixture of pagan rites and holidays in the second century, when Christian ministers affected the sacerdotal shadows of old and the name of "priest," the bondage of woman returned, her charities lost their freedom, and of course their breadth, variety and abundance—not all at once, indeed, but perceptibly begun to the eye of close attention in Church history. Ritualistic slavery began to chain the hands of woman and superstitious fear to palsy her benevolence and love. Let the student compare the vivid portraiture of pious women throughout the New Testament, from the birth of Jesus to the end of Romans, with the authentic annals of history from the middle of the second century to that of the third, and see how the gold became dim and the most fine gold was changed. Her beautiful charity was shrivelled, and councils were beginning to advise the discontinuance of her office.

(2) The invasion of monachism and virginity was another evil which largely accounts for the decline of church "business" in the hands of women. When we consider the model of a deaconess, furnished at first by the Spirit of inspiration (1 Tim. v. 10), and observe that she was a widow who had brought up children, etc., we can see how baleful and subversive to her office must have been the fanatical rage of anchoretic life, in

which marriage was avoided and despised as a lower sanctity, if sanctity at all of any degree. The widow might be still a beneficiary, as the vilest wretch might be, but the notion of an office in the Church for any one that ever had been a wife must be exploded. The succession of widows with such contaminating antecedents, or of maidens who vowed never to be married, and of course never to gain the experience which the office required at the first institution, would be a departure from the original far enough to make it soon an obsolete office entirely.

(3) Another cause of abolition was the exaltation of male deacons to a position which female deacons could never attain—that of preachers. In the conflict of the bishop with his ruling elders that eventuated in the suppression of the latter deacons were the great instrumentality employed by the former. The diaconate of any degree would never indeed be reckoned sacerdotal, but all the elders might be, as well as the bishops, for they were confessedly the same rank in Scripture; and the elders had made the bishops, by their own designation, at the beginning. The parochial chief, as we have noticed in another connection, would always find the suffragans an obstruction to his ambition, and as soon as he felt himself to be a priest with sacerdotal aspirations he wished to go higher than a parish, and he could not have the sturdy elders with him as a hierarch. The diocesan must, therefore, have his servants to be "his eye, his ear, his hand" and the medium of all communication with his people. Of course *rulers* would not be such, and the traditional servants of the Church must now become his own peculiar "helps;" and the consequence was a liberal recompense which soon made

them the richest order of the Church, and personally advanced them in function to any degree short of priesthood, and to any privilege in ministering the word short of dispensing both of the sacraments.

Precisely here it was that the deaconess became forsaken and helpless in the diaconate; for the same pastoral letter that contains the charter of her office prohibits expressly her privilege to preach or to teach publicly in the church. The virgin purity of her deaconship must therefore become a protest against the deflection of men in the office and against the ambitions of priests and prelates to rise, and raise the servants over the rulers to be their own factitious adjutants in the race of aggrandizement. Elders who had been rulers only, either would catch the same contagion to covet better gifts and come to sacerdotal honors, or would quit in disgust a station which was now trodden under foot by servants in livery. So they vanished, but the deaconesses had too much hold on the heart of the Church to be easily dislodged and abated. It required many councils composed of bishops, priests and deacons to rid themselves of woman's record and reproach against them. Rancor and ridicule, combined with the stigma of clerical condemnation from one generation to another, scarcely destroyed this office in eleven centuries. At the ultimate obliteration, however, all was dead or dying of this true apostolic institution. It was the darkest hour just before the dawn of day in the revival of letters.

If the great Reformation had been half as much concerned for the reconstruction of a primitive visibility as for the definition of doctrines, it would not have failed quickly to restore the deaconship to the plane on which it was placed and left by "the seven" gifted men to whom

it was entrusted by the first disciples. There it was made male and female, catholic as the new dispensation it served; apostolic inspiration promptly recognized and enrolled the office of woman. But the Reformers were behind the age in being contented to leave the servitors of the synagogue as they had been till the Grecians complained of their widows being neglected in the daily ministration. Yet the new life, "powers of the world to come," rekindled in the Reformation needs no "seven" "over this business" to reconstruct the office and to restore the women whom the apostles once for all designated and commended for official adaptation. Their claim is strong enough to be self-asserted and they are a law to themselves, instinct and inspirited with all the analogies of that gospel which has made them anew. It is no usurpation of office, but the redemption of office, for them to organize a corporate existence of their own which will require the normal authority of the Church to follow if it fail to lead. Already its male deaconship is comparatively idle, being superseded by the voluntaryism of woman.

Idleness of the deacons, either male or female, at such a time as this, when we are confronted in the world with the gravest problems of modern civilization—the management of work and money for the good of men and the glory of God—will put to hazard the triumphs of the gospel itself. These problems baffle the wisdom of men all the world over, and the confusion of tongues through every department of human power, legislative, judicial and executive, only alarms us with dark uncertainty for the result. Against the equities of capital organizations are everywhere contrived by the poor to elevate labor and paralyze the wealth which employs it,

with even the prostration of industries unless the workingman succeeds to the whole extent of his unreasonable demands. On the other hand, riches are petrified and stand aloof from the sufferings of poverty occasioned by its own default. It is not in human nature to relieve the poor and encourage their industry when they are in arms of hostility against the enterprise which feeds them. Passions mutually inflamed thus by mutual misunderstanding cannot be allayed by the intervention or arbitration of men with maxims of uninspired wisdom.

"Never man spake like this Man" who said, "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets." This Golden Rule is given to the Church by her Head, and the hands in which the Church has put it with authorized application are the deacons, her financial ministers, her guardians of the poor, her committee of contact with secular interests and secular needs. Mutual claim and mutual concession, the sum of this rule, require a mutual conscience which only the religion of Christ will quicken and cultivate. When systems of human government crumble to ruin and become dissolved into first principles, they start to better life again only in the cradle which Christianity rocks with her conservatism. So in governments which stand by her help the social and economical disasters which occur so often will be remedied only by her application of the Golden Rule; and, as this requires tact more than teaching, so that ministry of religion which is accustomed to handle temporal things will become a chief instrumentality for controlling civil disorders. This moral side of "distribution" is mighty.

Now, the natural supremacy in tact confessedly be-

longs to woman; and when the grace of the Spirit and the gift of office combine with her touch to relieve the wretched at home and to send the gospel abroad, we have at once the best efficiency and the fairest adornment of Christian benevolence. Why, then, should the visible Church refuse or delay to restore the deaconess in ecclesiastical form to her own organization? Should we leave the corporate power of her combinations to wander about in exterior transactions and eccentric orbits, like the union of trades and the adventures of knights and the fitful conclaves of anarchy and communism, and that, too, when the male diaconate is at ease in Zion, having little or nothing to do in the recognized duties of this primitive order? The fact, familiar now, that the deacon's work is done so much by women is a sufficient answer to that plausible objection to the revival and continuance of a female diaconate which has prevailed so long on the surface of thought in the Church—that her office belonged to the ancient jealousy of sexes in the East, which forbade the social freedom of intercourse that now and here obtains. The assumption is not supported by authentic history; and if it were, the change in Western civilization, which freely mingles the sexes together in the circles of religious and refined society, only makes it the more expedient that sexes should be visibly combined in working under that official name which in Scripture is both male and female, reconstructed because "widows were neglected in the daily ministration."

A normal unison like this would, of course, mean a common subordination to the authority of elders, which in our system governs the diaconate as well as the membership in the way of direction, review and control. Only

the distribution of alms to the poor is the original and indefeasible discretion of deacons, which the elders may advise merely, without subjecting to their authority, original or appellate, the actual charities of this nature dispensed by deacons. This measure of independence will ever be sufficient to sustain the dignity of an office born of servitude anciently, and in the fulness of time emancipated and promoted as the right arm of benevolence in the Christian Church. The apostolic latitude and completeness conferred on this order by a ministry of gifts must ever abide the latitude of both sexes and the completeness of distribution for a whole world. There should be, therefore and accordingly, an organized unity, recognized and controlled by the Church in her judicatories, which would expunge from her present constitution but one word, "male," in the membership from which deacons are chosen—that masculine objection which hinders thousands of Presbyterians now from electing women as well as men to that very office which otherwise women will carry for themselves, outside of the Church proper, to do proper Church work.

We contemplate the same necessity in all the categories of duty that can be assigned to a Christian diaconate; not one of them can be performed completely without woman associated in the exercise of functions. Ever since the "young men" carried out for burial the dead bodies of Ananias and Sapphira duties of which males only were capable have been detached from this office and assigned to sextons, acolytes or subdeacons, as was most expedient for any particular church. It is only the sublime functions consecrated by the Saviour's lips, the apostles' commands and the directions of Philip and Stephen that remain through

all time to be ministered by scriptural deacons; and in every one of these, to be well done, there must be female associates in the office. Any comprehensive detail may suffice to indicate this.

(1) One of these duties—and the most ancient, indeed, which descends from the Old-Testament ecclesia—is to keep order in the sanctuary during the solemnities of worship and instruction. Thus, at Nazareth and the beginning of our Lord's own ministry in the synagogues of Galilee, the "minister"—a deacon under the name of a synonym—"delivered unto him the book" when he "stood up for to read;" and when he himself had read, "he closed the book and gave it again to the minister, and sat down." The figure of this one fact, a part for the whole, indicates a class of duties within the house of God which must be ministered by women as well as by men in dealing with both sexes of the congregation. The proprieties of reverence and godly fear to be observed and enforced according to the Westminster Directory, as well as ancient "constitutions," are to be prompted still: "Forbearing to read anything, except what the minister is then reading and citing; abstaining from all whisperings, from salutations of persons present or coming in; and from gazing about, sleeping, smiling, and all other indecent behavior." In all civilized places these improprieties cannot be prevented and dare not be reproved by men only, whether deacons, elders or preachers, without women of influence, whether in office or not, pervading the assembly with faithful observation and gentle dissuasion. In performing officially this important function at the assemblies of God's people deaconesses originally, it is said, distributed the whole congregation, obliging males to sit on one side and

females on the other, that the double diaconate might the better keep good order in public worship.

(2) Watching and visitation outside of the sanctuary is another important class of duties, which require both the deacon and the deaconess to perform them adequately at all. Elders are to be vigilant in exercising discipline upon the wayward and the offending; but the deacons also are to inspect the conduct in temporal things, and to report the delinquencies and misdemeanors which trouble the flock and discredit the gospel in its contact with the world. They are thus to be the eye and the ear of the bishop, as they were anciently regarded—the messengers and committee of vigilance for pastor and elders. But men alone can do this to a very partial extent. They cannot explore the realm of gossip or the intricacies of scandal or the delicacy of crises where offences are to be prevented; and it is honorable to woman that without contamination she may pass through observations and discoveries of evil which men could never make, and therefore she is an indispensable witness for the guidance of judicial administration. When her office was discontinued in the Catholic Church, discipline was ruined. The secrets of the confessional and the sale of indulgences followed the suppression of deaconesses with logical sequence. On the other hand, the deaconess may be as the eye and the ear to every parochial bishop in giving him notice of sickness and distress among the people of which otherwise he could not know to come in time with the consolations which his office administers; and many a family has been alienated from the pastor by his tardiness in coming, which would have been prevented by the watchfulness of a faithful deaconess.

(3) Another class of duties are those of hospitality, and here woman is indispensably an officer "following every good work." Deacons may gather in the strangers, but without a deaconess to entertain them, to "lodge strangers" and "wash the saints' feet," and "diligently" to perform the true rites of hospitality, but few guests will turn out to be "angels unawares." In this category of diaconate service there is increasing need of Christian hostelry, appointed places of accommodation where the benevolence of the Church to strangers has an open house for all occasions, social freedom and sure supply for any varieties of need among the strangers. Private entertainment in families must be always a precarious good on account of inconvenience or inability—possibilities which diminish more and more the spontaneous hospitality of our fathers in proportion to the facilities of travel, the frequency of conventional occasions and the exactions of ceremony in modern life. Probably the hospitable heart of piety has abated also in consequence of the manifold surfaces of social intercourse in contrast with the simplicity of ancient life, and with the cradle of our own life in a generation before us. But all these causes of change and abatement in the spirit of charity must be countervailed by functions of office in charity which will make it more than ever a "business" in the hands of Phœbes. What is lessened in the fountain may be increased by the tribute of streams below it with skilled labor in directing them; and wisdom in such benefaction calls for the deaconess.

(4) The diaconate is not a domestic service in the Church only: it is also foreign missionary and ubiquitous. The name alone of "deacon"—meaning urgency of service—signifies to be in haste and away, serving a

ransomed Church by the spread of this offered ransom to the ends of the earth. Expansiveness is another characteristic bestowed upon the office, when a ministry of gifts at the birth of missions took hold of it with supervision. "The Dispersion" of Grecian Jews doubtless went home throughout Asia to publish the piety and the philanthropy of that renovated order at Jerusalem which had silenced all complaint and satisfied every want of the stranger with their liberal benefactions. So they began to send, and so continued to send, as we see in the last paragraph of Paul's Epistle to the Romans, where the order had sent themselves as well as their charities in goodly number. And these were greeted there as a female diaconate. Wherever, in any age, the relief and the elevation of woman are procured by the gospel, there cultivated women at home who enjoy its blessings are the main instrumentality of promulgation.

Facts demonstrate that either virtually or in form woman must be trusted with collection and distribution in raising means for missions both at home and abroad. Why she is not commissioned, as man is, with a name and a place in the walls of this house—"an everlasting name that shall not be cut off"—is the wonder and the shame of our tardiness. All these four classifications of duty show that woman must indispensably be a partner, and the great movements of the kingdom at this time show her help as fast becoming the largest volume of benevolence. It should be regulated help, consolidated resources, governed responsibilities, chartered recompenses and a titled "honor;" otherwise, the titular significance of deacons will be that of a beggared heraldry among us. They seem to have little or nothing to do at present. The "male" member is idle, for the

most part, and the busy females of this house are supporting him, actually doing his work more and better than he can do it, and yet they are not allowed to share his title—even the nominal credit of a name which is both male and female in its original. Time speeds on to make words to be things or to make them obsolete. The world itself will compel the Church to be consistent.

CHAPTER XIV.

ORDINATION TO OFFICE.

THE continuance of the Old-Testament ecclesia, or synagogue, in its organic forms through the early ages of Christianity until the Council of Nice—fully three centuries—can be marked in the names and numbers of officers not only, but also, and especially, in the methods of investiture with office. Even after the old sacerdotalism returned and official parlance became "priest" more than "elder" in designating the presbyter and the parochial bishop, a formal induction combined the two actions of election and the laying on of hands. The Greeks called the former *Χειροτονία*, and the latter *Χειροθεσία*; the Latins comprehended both in the word *ordinatio*. Popular election is undoubtedly signified by the former of these Greek words—literally "stretching out the hand in voting"—and the second means the action of those already in office confirming the popular suffrage by laying their hands on the head of the chosen. In the *Life of Alexander Severus* (A. D. 222–235), as written by Lampridius, we are told that this young emperor, whose mother is said (conjecturally) to have been a Christian, ordered the scrutiny of the people to be invoked in estimating the character of those he designed to appoint to office under his government. His words given by the historian evidently

blend the synagogue and the church together as one and the same visible institution in this particular: "He said it was a miserable thing that when the Christians and the Jews observed this method of publishing the names of their priests before they were ordained, the like care should not be taken about the governors of provinces, with whom the lives and fortunes of men were entrusted." * It is here plainly suggested that the formal grace of office among Christians, as well as among Jews, emanated from the people conditionally and primarily as well as from the powers above them in the nomination and ultimate confirmation.

Both history and process, therefore, must be noticed in giving an accurate account of that introduction to Christian office which we call ordination. Instead of being a mystery or a sacrament or an impalpable something which one man has and another has not, imparted on a peculiar occasion, it is transparently a matter of fact which common sense can read and understand. It is that solemnity in which one is set apart from the universal priesthood of believers to a special ministry in the Church of Christ. It is both visible and invisible in its nature, just like the Church itself. If it were only visible, it would not be fit for the "mystery of godliness;" if it were only invisible, it would belong to a different life in another world. Extreme simplification cannot express it, and logical *finesse* cannot define it.

Looking at the nature of such a consecration when it is complete and unquestionably valid, five distinct elements may be distinguished in making out the result:

* See Lardner's *Works*, vol. iv. p. 178.

1. The gifts or aptitudes bestowed by the Head of the Church upon the candidate. Rom. xii. 8; Eph. iv.

2. The desire awakened by the Holy Ghost for the exercise of such a calling. 1 Tim. iii. 1.

3. This desire tested in the course of preparation made by education, experience and the formation of character.

4. Appreciation by the people in having no objection, but rather approval, to make, and indicated either by immediate voting or by representative action.

5. Public and formal confirmation by the act and declaration of those already in office, represented by a presiding officer who is authorized to make official announcement.

The first three of these elements may be assumed either as sufficiently obvious or as belonging more to the studies of pastoral theology; the fourth may be largely inferred from principles already presented more or less directly. The people, parents and children, constitute the Church as a visible body. To receive and accept an office is one of the cardinal rights and privileges of membership in the Church. The depository of power must ultimately be ascertained there in the body which inspiration describes to be "a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people." Theocracy itself called upon all the tribes of Israel to signify assent to the choice of Levi in the consecration of persons to service in the sanctuary, and it is not merely at the installation of a man already ordained that the popular vote is made an integral part of the process: it is prior and deeper, as an element in the separation, for those who work with their hands to subsist themselves and others have a natural right to say who these others shall

be; and if they are to be invested with any office which allows them to work also in the ordinary productions of labor, it must be one which bears immediately on the fellow-members concurrently with them in pursuits of industrial life. And because of this concernment there is a reasonable franchise of consent to be obtained for non-producing members. In short, there is no functional economy under the sun, physical or moral, without the level of some reciprocal action between claim and consent, office and suffrage. Any practical inconvenience may be avoided by representation, and yet this representation must not be out of sight, remote from the people and but constructively found.

Imposed representation is only factitious and cannot endure. Even the apostles, who represented the people at first by appointment of our Lord, without any popular election, hastened to begin organization by votes of the people (Acts vi.), and this not to relieve themselves of a troublesome responsibility, but to make a spiritual division of labor in which the people were immediately represented by officers of their own choice. And soon afterward, at Antioch, as prophets and teachers were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Ghost said to them, "Separate me Barnabas and Saul, for the work whereunto I have called them," and this work proved to be the organization of churches through Asia Minor, in which elders were ordained by the people voting (*Χειροτονήσαντες*), with confirmation by apostles ministered on their visitation when returning, after the people had an opportunity of "looking out" for themselves to choose. Acts xiv. 23. We cannot accept the interpretation of the Greek word here given by Selden —in which he is followed by Vitringa—that the two

distinct acts in ordination, election and confirmation, are blended together as one in the hands of apostles themselves on this occasion. Granting that the ordination was their act, the mode, the persons chosen and the process of choosing may well be indicated in the terms of expression: the language has other words for mere appointment. The Authorized Version is, "Had ordained them elders in every church;" the recent Revised Version is, "When they had appointed for them elders in every church." Why say "them" in one and "for them" in the other if the meaning is simply they ordained or appointed elders? Unless we understand the figurative gesture expressed by the word "stretching out the hand" to be a part for the whole proceeding, the voting of the people conjointly with the confirmation by apostles—that is, the latter procuring for themselves a designation by the people of the men whom they accordingly ordained—we cannot understand the phraseology here.

It is true that the general sense of appointment was accepted as a secondary and subsequent one for the term; but it cannot be that apostles engrossed the whole action in ordaining elders, and that the people had less privilege in this procedure than in the appointment of deacons, where divided action is marked with such emphatic distinctness. Surely the primordial pattern of ordination at Jerusalem was not lost in Asia, and the people of the Church were not excluded from voting for governors, when they had been previously called to "look out among themselves" for servants of the Church. The primary sense undoubtedly is to "appoint by vote;" and if the word for "voting" is used to express the whole transaction, we should allow at least an allusion

or part of the meaning to be suffrage by the people, who were doubtless better acquainted with the men to be selected than were Barnabas and Saul.

We are told by Clement of Rome in his First Epistle to the Corinthians—the purest fragment of all patristic literature—that the first ordinations of bishops and deacons were done in the same way by the apostles, and that they were first proved, and then appointed. This probation is called by him "testing in the Spirit" or "by the Spirit," with evident allusion to the direction of the apostles given to the people at the election of deacons: "Look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom." There was probation, therefore, made by the people themselves, as well as by the ordainers, from the beginning of the Christian Church in testing the fitness of candidates for any office. Later Fathers express the probation by insisting on all appointments made to be done in the presence of the people, to give opportunity to any one among them for making objection or signifying approval. And sometimes the acclamations of the assembly would overwhelm the pleasure of ordainers themselves, and compel them to consecrate the nominee of a multitude. Even the aristocratic Cyprian, after elders began to be called "priests," insisted that every ordination should be performed in this way: "God commands a priest to be appointed in the presence of all the assembly—that is, he instructs and shows that the ordination of priests ought not to be solemnized except with the knowledge of the people standing near, that in the presence of the people either the crimes of the wicked may be disclosed or the merits of the good may be declared; and the ordination, which shall have been examined

by the suffrage and judgment of all, may be just and legitimate."* Such is the strong tradition of a popular element in any ordination to New-Testament office.

And this has ever been secured by an antecedent preparation of the candidate, in the good providence of God, for the favor and confidence of the people. There must be under observation, directly or indirectly, among the people some prerequisite fitness they can trust in winning their suffrage. So in the year 374, when Auxentius, bishop of Milan, died and the Arians attempted to elect one of their own party as the successor, a tumult with the orthodox people became a riot in the church, and Ambrose, governor of Liguria, residing in Milan, had to come and quell it with his power. A little child cried out, when he appeared, "Ambrose! Bishop!" and presently the whole mob cried out, "Let him be the bishop!" He had been well known there for his excellent probity and skill as a civil ruler, and the Church accepted the nomination made even in this rude way. He was forthwith baptized, giving up his wealth and his worldly honors for the sacred office, and, being soon after consecrated with appropriate ceremonies, he became one of the most devoted, conservative and useful bishops that ever adorned the Latin Church. But far better than this accidental and exceptional way of popular election is the preliminary probation of candidates devised in modern education. The method of licentiate itinerancy before ordination has hardly ever failed to work out the discovery of a man's fitness or unfitness in ascertaining the nomination of one who is heard gladly by the people, or, on the contrary, a seasonable discontinuance of probation by revoking the

* Cyprian's Epistle 67.

license when he is seen to have little or no favor with the people. A candidate for the ministry should therefore quit the cloister as soon as he quits the college, and should manifest his gifts to the people of the church as much as possible in consistency with training by study; and especially if the practice be prevalent of contracting the interval between license and ordination to few days in order to fledge a novitiate quickly for evangelism at home or a mission abroad without the prior test of popularity, he should begin the trial of his gifts before them as soon as he begins theological study. For this element of popular consent is more ancient than are theological seminaries, and is too sacred to be strained out of ordination by haste and urgency of any circumstances.

Chastened popularity, therefore, is a prime condition of any office in the Church, as all the offices are embraced in the scope of preaching, and we may briefly comprise the argument for this in the following propositions:

1. The very nature of the Church, as an assembly of the faithful, is that of a sacerdotal republic. Ex. xix. 6; 1 Pet. ii. 9. As her members are all an election from the world, their officers are an election from themselves —a chosen few, moved by the Spirit, named by the people and consecrated by the vows which those who are already in office administer and confirm with becoming gesture and declaration to the people. Thus consecrated, they represent both God and man by the functions they exercise, the office being of divine appointment and the ministration of it for the good of humanity. Such is the science of sacred office under all dispensations. Even the Levites, as observed before, when emphatically chosen

of God as a whole tribe to the special service of religion, and so permanently invested as to hold their commission by inheritance, were not to be set apart without the consent of all Israel assembled. Num. viii. 9, 10. How much more consistent is it with the larger and freer franchise of the New-Testament Church, whose ministers of religion go up alike from every tribe and anew from every generation, thus to require a distinct consent of the people before the last formality of a complete consecration!

2. Acts of the Apostles furnish examples of the same. Even an apostle was thus chosen to fill the vacancy left by Judas. One apostle stood before the whole assembly of disciples and defined the qualifications required of the man to be chosen. The congregation then appointed—that is, nominated—two candidates, probably the only persons known to possess the precise qualifications premised; then "they prayed," and "they gave forth their lots" to ascertain the divine designation which was to honor the popular nomination by taking one of their men. If so much was made of popular concurrence in the choice of Matthias to be an apostle, under the direction of apostles and in their presence, how much more does it pertain to the appointment of ordinary and permanent officers of the Church that are supplied by choice without a lottery or any special interposition of Heaven!

Accordingly, the next example is more significant, being the first formal appointment in supplying the need of a permanent office, the election of the seven to superintend the office and work of deacons. The apostles themselves moved first in this matter, to indicate that inspiration designed the whole transaction, to be copied

indeed from the old economy, and now to be enlarged in the scope and dignity of service. But election by the people was to be still the same as it had been. "The whole multitude" of voters were called, the object of the call was explained, the qualifications of men to be chosen were prescribed, a vote was taken to approve the measure, and then the people in a "multitude" looked out for themselves the proper men to be elected; and after this *χειροτονία* the confirming *χειροθεσία* followed in consummation.

Bellarmine objects to this radical proof that the ultimate depository of church power is in the people whenever the Holy Ghost resides among them and within them, by saying it was "a small material concern" which the apostles thus left to the people—the service of tables and the disbursement of money for an occasion. We answer, It was an office in the church that required men "full of the Holy Ghost and of faith" to man it, and spiritual men to discern and elect them—an office which Rome continued and exalted over elders, making it a preaching office higher than princes and everything that is rich and great except the sacerdotal. And if the people were to concur in choosing men to disburse their charities because of the interest they have in that service, why should they not much more be allowed to choose men for the greater concernment of teaching and ruling them?

Acts of the people are inseparably woven with acts of the apostles both before and after the miracles of Pentecost; so that only the witness-bearing pre-eminence of the latter in "the testimony of Jesus," to Jew and Gentile made them founders of Christianity. Their mission was not to rule or to make rulers, but to testify

and to preach. Men who believed them governed themselves, and only the ministry of gifts made new offices while they lived which were transient as themselves. Even before the supernatural and extraordinary agencies of that epochal fulness of time had passed away, and the apostolic representatives of the people, under the great commission of our Lord, were done with their peculiar work, they co-operated with the body of the faithful in upholding the old ecclesia, with its popular forms of franchise and Presbytery, and immediately afterward the traces of popular election were abundant in the primitive organizations of uninspired men.

Clement of Rome, the first and best of the apostolic Fathers, in his genuine and authentic epistle to the Corinthians—the main object of which was to repress divisions among the people in regard to their officers, and especially teaching elders—says, in allusion to the apostles, "We are of opinion, therefore, that those appointed by them, or afterward by other eminent men, *with the consent of the whole Church*, and who have blamelessly served the flock of Christ in a humble, peaceable and disinterested spirit, and have for a long time possessed the good opinion of all, cannot justly be dismissed from the ministry." Ch. xliv. In the next century (second) Tertullian, in the thirty-ninth section of his *Apology*, writes, "*The tried men* of our elders preside over us, obtaining that honor not by purchase, but by *established character*." Clement of Alexandria, in the same century, says in the thirteenth chapter of his *Miscellanies:* "Such an one is in reality a presbyter of the church and a true deacon of the will of God if he do and teach what is the Lord's—not as being elected by men nor regarded righteous because a presbyter, but

enrolled in the Presbytery because righteous." Cyprian, also, in the third century, whose churchly tendencies are prized so highly by churchmen who have long since eliminated the popular element in ordination, abounds in notices of popular voting as normally connected with the solemnities of ordination. In writing to his people at Carthage (Ep. 39) he speaks of some old venom against "*your suffrage* and God's judgment," meaning the authority which had made him a bishop. In his fifty-fourth letter, addressed to Cornelius, he writes: "No one, after the divine judgment, *after the suffrage of the people*, after the consent of the co-bishops, would make himself a judge, not now of the bishop, but of God." In his sixty-seventh epistle, speaking of Sabinus, a colleague, he says: "So that by *the suffrage of the whole brotherhood*, and by the sentence of the bishops, who had assembled in their presence, the episcopate was conferred upon him and hands were imposed upon him," etc.

Thus we might glean expressions through all the literature of early and ante-Nicene Christianity which mean that believing people are the basis of a visible Church; that the commission of our ascending Lord, which folded in its volume all representation, was bestowed upon them; that the first and immediate representatives, being named by himself as witnessing apostles, were careful on all occasions to lean upon the suffrages of the body; and that after they were withdrawn from the field the succeeding ministry considered the will of this body as a primal consent to be had and distinctly recorded in the annals of ecclesiastical procedure.

4. The wariness enjoined upon evangelists in 1 Tim.

v. 22, "Lay hands suddenly on no man," must mean chiefly waiting on the people for the attestation of character which they only can make in their opinions. Gifts might be ascertained quickly by one already in office and a lone ordainer be a competent judge; but character must lie in popular estimation and be certified by the popular assent. And here again we are brought round to the premises from which we started. From the people themselves must be the reputation evolved as a rudiment in the title without which no power on earth can fairly appoint any man as a teacher, a ruler or a servant in the Church of Christ. Hence even councils were employed to regulate the ballot or method in which the popular will should be united with the clerical authority in ordination. The Fourth Council of Carthage ordered that, as a bishop was not to ordain without the concurrence of the clergy, so also should he seek the satisfaction of the people: "Ita civium assensum et conniventiam et testimonium quærat." And later councils ordered the *viva-voce* voting as better suited to call out the assent or dissent of the people, with the words, ἄξιος and ἀνάξιος, than the primitive "stretching out of the hand,"—all this to manifest how the scruple descended on behalf of popular suffrage even after this equity was virtually buried under the feet of a hierarchy.

It was this ancient and uniform choice by the people which led to the rigid necessity of ordaining ministers of the gospel, as well as other church-officers, in connection with some particular locality that gave title to the functionary. With singular inconsistency, the Council of Trent, which so definitely built the whole Church upon the bishops, and one line of bishops, eliminating all thought of the people from the conception of Church,

insisted with special enactment on the necessity of some particular place being connected with every official investment. Caste has not a local habitation. It was the notion of a ministry suited to the people and resting on the will of the people in each particular place which stereotyped the usage of ordination *cum titulo.* Protestants who restore immunities to the people, and especially Presbyterians, who temper these rights with a conservative authority of elders that represent the people as rulers in serving them, are not so rigid or so blind on this point. It is with them a living and reasonable restriction rather than a petrifaction. Ordinations with us are often—perhaps too often—made *sine titulo;* that is, without locating the teaching elder in a particular charge.

In the earlier generations of the American Church this usage was not allowed in cases of ordination, because it put out of sight too much the actual vote of the people, so scriptural and just and long-continued. The Presbytery had to ask the Synod for permission to do so in exceptional necessities. Samuel Stanhope Smith, distinguished in the history of Princeton education, a teacher of theology here before a seminary existed, desired to be ordained by the Presbytery of Newcastle in accepting a call from a church in the Presbytery of Hanover. The Presbytery consulted the Synod of Philadelphia, and the Synod refused because the vote of the people in making the call was too far away from the subsequent imposition of hands to consist with the unity and completeness of the proposed ordination. They must be seen together as one solemnity with two inseparable elements, and the people must vote at the ordination, as much as if it were only installation. The greater freedom of Presbyteries now has been occasioned,

for the most part, by the imperative necessity of missions, which predominate wisely and well in the usages of Presbytery at home and abroad. Ordinations *sine titulo* may be made safely among us—

First, because a Presbytery in our system is not sacerdotal in its nature, but composed entirely of representatives of the people. Both ministers and elders are such, and what the people do by them they do by themselves, in fair construction. Ordaining power in them is, therefore, competent, as no prelate is to combine what the Bible conjoins—acts of the apostles and acts of the people together, both measure and mode of order according to the Scriptures.

Secondly, because ordination is only means to an end, and therefore may be shaped in any way best calculated to secure that end when circumstances demonstrate the necessity of an exceptional mode. The special necessity of missions, descending to us from apostolic times, must retain the exceptional peculiarities of a formative state, and much must be done for the planting of churches at the first which should not be continued after an established organization.

Thirdly. Established regulations must be popular and require more and more a deference to the will of the people, inasmuch as the choice of their will becomes wiser and safer by the general instruction which stated ordinances of grace will certainly diffuse. The curriculum of a theological education never advances faster than the intelligence of that public mind which it is preparing to guard and to guide; and the country, in every corner of it, is quite as capable as is the city, if not more so, in judging the merits of a licensed or an unlicensed preacher who comes to make trial of his gifts

as a candidate for the ministry in full ordination. The itinerancy of a whole year, at least, should be assigned to any probationer, however gifted, if it could be done, by sending him to vacant churches with a scale of appointments made in advance by competent authority, to save him from the embarrassment of being self-sent, with the appearance of scrambling for places. Such arrangement saves the people also from the embarrassment of committing themselves more or less to the man they send for before knowing that he will suit them with his adaptations. Small denominations have adopted this method with a happy success, and large denominations should have a bureau of supplies, with similar management, to make adjustments wisely, which will at once relieve and circulate the probation for that popular assent which the solemnity of ordination requires. Herein is the visible catholicity of our calling: "Ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called." The only medium in which Christianity can live and breathe is the average body of the people.

The Laying on of Hands.

Popular suffrage, in the form of expressed or implied assent of those who are to be served by the functions of any office, must be formally ratified by those already in office, either of the same or of a higher degree. After and along with the *χειροτονία*, or gesture of voting, must be the *χειροθεσία*, or confirmation by the gesture of recognition, which has been the same in all ages of the ecclesia, Old Testament and New, laying hands on the head of a chosen candidate to signify the human cognizance of a divine selection and the notice to all

men of what God has entrusted to a particular man whom he has qualified and sent on a particular service. This requires, of course, the discernment of those who are qualified to judge by their experience in exercising the same functions as well as by their spiritual communion with the fountain of all authority in the Church of Christ. Added to this intrinsic propriety is the relative necessity of order in all government on earth. The seals of office are handed over by the outgoing to the incoming official as a spectacle to all observers of an orderly tradition. The right hand of fellowship is extended by those who are already within the circle of a good fraternity in the welcome offered visibly to a newly-elected accession.

The natural fitness of this final action sufficiently explains the nature of ordination—that it is an indication rather than a communication, that no grace of office has been tied to its procedure, that the worthy receiver is by no "corporate or carnal manner" like this visible transaction made partaker of any inward grace that he had not realized before this consummation of his call. In a word, ordination is not a sacrament in any distinct or proper sense, else our Lord himself would have made it a rite in his own ministry, as he did baptism and the Supper. When he ordained the original twelve, it was by simple appointment, and not by the laying on of his hands, and so, also, were the many sent forth by the Holy Ghost in apostolic times commissioned simply by a gift of office. True, the novitiate may receive a special increment of grace on that occasion, like any other in which the trial of his faith is made as it leans upon the promise, "Lo, I am with you alway." Whether it be ceremony, hardship, antagonism or conflict in the minis-

try, it is all the same in deriving virtue from the Master according to our faith. Divine appointment on record in God's word is indispensable to the lodgment of special grace in any rite, and even when so appointed the ministration to us must be that of the Holy Ghost, who signifies and seals sacramentally, in water, bread and wine only as these are set apart from a common to a sacred use by positive and perpetual injunction.

When Timothy is enjoined to "lay hands suddenly on no man," we have the remarkable metonymy which imports three things, at least: 1. That there should be cautious delay on the part of the ordainer, and corresponding maturity in the preparation of a candidate; 2. That the ceremony of consecration is to be conducted by one or more already in office; and 3. That the laying on of hands as a significant action should be continued indefinitely as a crowning act in complete ordination. It could not be the symbol in this case of conferring extraordinary gifts alone, as some allege; for, besides the fact that none but apostles conferred those gifts, there could be no room for the exercise of discretion on the part of an evangelist: not even apostles could delay when moved by the Holy Ghost to act as an instrumentality for that purpose.

That this gesture of recognition was designed to be ordinary and perpetual in the tradition of office may be inferred also from examples in the New-Testament history. Timothy's own ordination was "with the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery" (1 Tim. iv. 14) —a distinct action, obviously, from that of Paul in laying only his own hands on Timothy, as we have repeatedly observed, to impart a gift peculiar to that age, the extraordinary faith which dwelt in his mother

and his grandmother. 2 Tim. i. 6. The gift so ministered by a lone apostle the recipient is exhorted to "stir up"—rekindle as with hot embers turned up from the ashes. But to stir up an office would be solecism in language. In regard to this the exhortation is entirely different, importing the experience of all ministers through succeeding time: "Endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry." 2 Tim. iv. 5. Hence the propriety of the apostle's charge pertaining to ordination—"Neglect not," etc. "The laying on of hands," as a formality of induction, belongs to the ordinary and perpetual, therefore, as well as the extraordinary, in consecration to office. At the ordination of the "seven" (Acts vi.) the same formality was observed. And, whether we regard the seven as deacons merely or more than deacons—a ministry of gifts to superintend for a time that service, the ordinary and the extraordinary blended together—we have the Old-Testament usage of this gesture initiated for indefinite duration in the New. And so familiar did this usage become that the apostle Paul seems to make "laying on of hands" in figure a name for office itself, indicating a standing ministry in the church, to be perpetual, as are the fundamental doctrines of baptism, resurrection from the dead and eternal judgment. Heb. vi. 2.

It being, therefore, obviously, a permanent usage, according to Scripture, we ought distinctly to understand what it means. We derive the significance of this action from the origin of its use in the Old Testament. When the dying Jacob, with the spirit of prophecy upon him, proceeded to bless the sons of Joseph, he guided his hands wittingly, though too blind to see, and, regardless

of their own father's wish and suggestion, laid his right hand on the head of the younger and his left hand on the head of the elder—not to communicate anything, but to indicate only what the divine inspiration led him to discern and impelled him to utter about the tribal destinies of the grandchildren under his hands. Gen. xlviii. 14.

When the Levites were chosen to wait as a tribe on the service of religion, a special consecration to the Lord, the whole assembly of tribes was gathered to lay their hands upon the heads of these brethren—not, surely, to impart any mystic virtue thereby, but to indicate the consent of all Israel that this tribe should be taken wholly, instead of the first-born of every family. Num. viii.

When Joshua was to be set apart as the successor of Moses, it was said to the latter, "Take thee Joshua, the son of Nun, a man in whom is the spirit, and lay thine hand upon him; and set him before Eleazar and before all the congregation, and give him a charge in their sight." Num. xxvii. 18. Nothing can be plainer than that here was merely a significant declaration by the use of the hand that an appointment had been already made and official unction already imparted.

The ceremony of laying hands on the head of the victim when sin was publicly confessed and atonement made was not any communication of human sins to an irrational brute, but an expressive indication of liability transferred from the actual sinner to the legal substitute typified in the scape or the immolated beast.

In short, all the various expressions of this act throughout the Old-Testament Scriptures may be reduced to this radical import of designation, with solem-

nity of emphasis, for the purpose of arresting attention and procuring respect for some one already appointed of God. The Church, being herself continued identically, has continued the same usages of ordination, attaching to it no mystery, realizing in it no communication, finding in it no descent of apostolic virtue, but wearing it ever as a badge of office to note and recognize the call of God and movement of his Spirit, and the resulting right of others to take part in the same ministry of reconciliation. Only the hands of our Lord himself, like "the hem of his garment" in the time of supernatural dealing, could impart either functions of life or grace of office. Even his wonder-working apostles would exclaim, "Why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our power or holiness we had made this man to walk?" Their nominal successors can have no stream of virtue in them to flow higher than the fountain. The hands of a prelate are not more potential than were those of Peter and John "at the gate of the temple called Beautiful." And surely now they cannot be in their imposition more certainly the occasion of a divine presence and touch than the meeting together of "two or three" ministers in a Presbytery to conduct the solemnity of ordination.

From our simple apprehension of the rite we may gather many conclusions of practical importance:

1. That it is not essential to the validity of ordination. Reverence for examples in the Bible and respect for the usages of nearly all Christendom, ancient and modern, as well as the becoming naturalness of the action itself for such a purpose, ought to make us careful and scrupulous in the conservation of this form, while, at the same time, we should not forget that it is

only a form, and not explicitly commanded or appointed as a rite. Any officer in the church, from the highest to the lowest, might be validly inducted without the laying on of hands by those already in office to complete the ceremony of ordination when either by mistake or prejudice or inconvenience it has been omitted. The first Book of Discipline used by the Church of Scotland dispensed with it expressly, saying, "Other ceremonies except fasting, with prayer, such as laying on of hands, we judge not necessary in the institution of the ministry." The Methodist Church also dispensed with it, as we understand, for a century of their distinct organization. While the Presbyterian constitution now requires it in the ordination of ministers, it does not require it in the ordination of ruling elders and deacons, although the General Assembly of 1833 sanctioned the same formality in all such cases when it is preferred by any particular church. Convenience, however, as well as consistency, should be consulted. Everything in form which might produce confusion or levity in the circumstances should be avoided when it is not enjoined.

2. A second inference from this unmysterious nature of laying on the hands in ordination is that the transaction of Presbytery which orders it is more important than the ceremony itself. The substantial norm of which it is a proper sign is the vote of a representative Presbytery. Mere election by the people, though called for by this vote, as well as implied in it, is a relative as well as an absolute necessity in the completeness of ordination. It must relate to some official authority already existing, for alone it would be only revolution, an extreme necessity without law, which can seldom and hardly ever be justified. Even reformation is both

departure from and quick return to constituted authority. It is every way a reasonable need as well as a positive command that the things which we have learned from able and faithful men we should commit to men of like character in succeeding us—not the thing, as if it were some mystic virtue we had received and were bound to deliver downward with a sacramental charm and seal, but "the things"—the knowledge, doctrine, aptitude—we are to commit in the way of recognizing publicly and declaring that we believe such persons are taught of God and able to teach others also. This declaration is made both to God and to man, and by the usage of prayer more essentially than by that of imposing hands. It is made partly in fasting also, according to examples in Scripture. And these three exercises ought to be inseparable, converging in the thought of recognition invoked and announced by those already in office that the candidate is called of God to take part in this ministry with us.

3. A third inference is that such declaration in the symbolic action should be made only by those who have the power of order, distinct from that of jurisdiction, to perform all the public ceremonies of religion. The gesture in question is intrinsically soluble in words, and therefore only ministers of the word whom we call "teaching elders" should perform it, and that in all cases of ordination where it is adopted as the usage to lay hands on the head of the ruling elder and the deacon as well, these concurring in the action. Instances have occurred in certain branches of the Presbyterian family, when the quorum of preachers could not be present, of allowing one or more of the ruling elders to lay hands upon the head of a minister in his

ordination. This alternative may not invalidate the ceremony, indeed, but it is incongruous and might lead to confusing the due order of God's "house and family." It is enough for the ruling elder to vote the ordination, in Session or in Presbytery, as a representative of the people, but he is not in every office nor commissioned to expound the nature of any office in the way of public instruction, and therefore that epitome or symbol of such instruction which we see in the laying on of hands should be reserved in all cases to the ministers of the word, not excluding, however, the actual concurrence of elders or deacons, as the case may be, when addition is made to their own order respectively.

4. A fourth corollary from our simple apprehension of a complete ordination is that it may be repeated just as often as there is need of a new and solemn notification to the Church and the world that the same individual is called of God to another office or special function in the spiritual commonwealth. There is one ordination for the deacon, another for the ruling elder, a third for the teaching elder—a progression which has often been made, and which may often be made again. The form is always the same when properly complete, and distinction is made only in the vows administered and in the charge given. We have a striking example of this procedure in the thirteenth of Acts, where men already in the ministry—Barnabas and Paul—were set apart by divine direction, with fasting and prayer and the laying on of hands, for even a special mission in which they were employed not over three years. Many similar illustrations may be gleaned from history. In the Wesleyan polity bishops and elders are the same in rank, the former being chosen superintendents of the

latter for the sake of order and efficiency in service. Yet when an elder is elected to their episcopate the Methodist Episcopal Church give him another ordination in form, as he is now set apart to a special and paramount function supervening on the eldership. So, precisely, though inversely, our elders have one ordination as rulers and another as teachers, while both are included in the scriptural term "elder."

If the wisdom of the Holy Ghost would order a special ordination for Barnabas and Saul to signalize their consecration to a particular mission appointed in which prophets and teachers laid their hands on a minister of gifts and another of apostleship—if a modern church distinguished for practical economy, if not for scriptural breadth in matters of government and discipline, will have a new ordination of some among others in parity for a special function that seems to the world a superior and different office altogether—why should it be objected to the Presbyterian scheme, which makes a generic sense of elder, that it cannot consistently require another ordination of the man who passes from the status of a ruling to that of a teaching presbyter? Divest the rite of mystical import and make it simply the signal of another step forward in the visible kingdom of Christ, and we shall be vexed no more with supernatural problems in its natural history.

5. We are brought now to a fifth conclusion from our obvious premises—that ordination is in no sense whatever a sacrament or a channel in which faith is to find what has been found already in preparation for this formal enactment. As we have already noticed, the true grace of office will find its increment in any occasion, and in the very hardships of faithfulness occasioned

by its own functions, quite as much as, or more than, in the mere act of inauguration. Even accepting the vague definition of sacrament among the English divines—"a visible sign of an invisible grace"—we may well ignore the channel of communication supposed to be implied in the solemnity of ordination, and affirm that it is a sign of grace already bestowed whenever the candidate has been moved by the Spirit of God to seek the investment: "To him that hath shall be given;" "Take thee a man in whom is the spirit, and lay thine hand upon him." A gesture is no sacramental sign: there must be a material substance, and that specified by our Lord in his own express injunction. He did not lay his hands on any one to ordain him nor command his apostles to do so, nor yet interfere with them in their manifest continuance of Old-Testament usages, of which this laying on of the hands was a prominent one without being at all connected with sacraments, either old or new.

"The sacrament of orders," as it is called in the Latin Church, has always been a problem of perplexity in the adjustment of virtue supposed to be communicated by the laying on of hands, and any hierarchical system, in proportion to the number and variety of graduated office in the structure, must have some scale of allowance on which to estimate both quality and quantity in the distribution of a mystic efficacy conveyed. The Council of Trent was grievously baffled in attempting the task. Ordainers could not, of course, impart anything else or more than what is in themselves derivatively—of kind, at least. And still greater was the embarrassment in ascertaining the difference of degree in which the same sort of virtue should be measured

out in supplying subordinate ranks of the same generic priesthood. Similar confusion betides the speculation of Protestant writers, who, though not affirming the sacramental nature of ordination, allege the probability of an active faith on the part of an intrant, finding official grace in the channel of a ceremony coming down through the ages like a conduit from the apostles themselves. Such a theory, to be consistent, must consider official grace in parcels: each office conveying only what is in itself to flow, each level must have its own rivulet —bishops only ordaining bishops; elders only, elders; deacons only, deacons. For no officer can give to others what he does not possess himself, and to give one of inferior degree less than he possesses incurs the task of calculating a subtracted value in official grace, which would make a frivolous mystery of all Christian office. How incomparably better and more becoming the dignity of Christian faith is that declarative recognition by those already in office of the fitness which God has given the aspirant for this or any other office to which he is called in the Church! The laying on of hands by the ministry of the word signifies this much, and no more. "The simplicity that is in Christ" needs only indication and emphasis in any gesture of man.

6. We need not be troubled much about reordination. On the same principle that we ordain an officer who has been ordained to one office when he advances to another of different functions, we receive the minister of a different denomination whose form of ordination differs from our own and would not be accredited as regular according to our own constitution. The only question to be raised is the manifest intention and adequate declaration of any form which is unlike our own. If

the same duties of office were contemplated and the same fitness recognized and the same notification designed by legitimate ordainers outside of our own denomination, there should be no hesitation of acceptance because of a diversity of usage for the same end. The *de-facto* formation of another branch in the visible Church may have to wait for a time until the organization is fairly understood by older branches. There was a refusal by the Presbyterian Church in 1792, and repeated in 1800, to recognize ordination by the Methodist Church; but ten years later, this refusal being maturely reconsidered, it was resolved by the General Assembly that it should not be a precedent to "guide the future decisions of the judicatories." And this was reaffirmed emphatically in 1852 (p. 210). In 1821 it was put on record that "the Presbyterian Church has always considered the ordinations of most other Protestant churches as valid in themselves, and not to be repeated."

But it must be "a pious and learned ministry" that is validated so in giving and receiving ordination—"faithful men who shall be able to teach." This is the scriptural fitness to be recognized and proclaimed in the solemnity. Churches that ordain the uneducated who have no other evidence of fitness than desire to exercise "the office of a bishop," though not unchurched in the reckoning, are not to be recognized as regular in the rite of ordaining to the ministry of the word. Their ministers may come to us and "wait for orders" only in waiting for a competent education, and, this being ascertained, a simple vote of the Presbytery is enough to acknowledge the validity of ordination already upon them. We "require the applicants from other denom-

inations to continue their study and preparation till they are found, on trial and examination, to be qualified in learning and ability to teach in the manner required by our standards, but that when found thus to be qualified it shall not be necessary to reordain the said applicants, but only to install them when they are called to settle in Presbyterian congregations."*

The simplicity and largeness of the principle here affirmed is in contrast with the complicated agonies of those artificial systems of catholicism which make a sacramental importance of words and gestures in the act of ordination. There has been as much trouble about the omission of a word or two in pronouncing a formula, or about the exact pedigree of an officiating prelate, as if the rock itself on which the Church is built had been shaken by the blunder. Councils have been called and sees have thundered excommunication against one another in fighting over the maladministration of a rite which superstition invests with cabalistic mystery. "The result at length," says Palmer, "is to recognize no ordinations which are made in heresy or schism;" and wherever a doubt exists about the validity of even a Catholic ordination the refuge is in repetition, knowing that the grace imparted cannot be in excess, while the want of it may jeopard the souls of men. And yet, as repetition implies the invalidity of priestly acts already done, the conservators of this grace are sadly perplexed by any accident or inadvertence, and might well covet the easier conscience of what they call "uncovenanted" Presbyterians.

7. The laying on of hands in ordination does not communicate authority any more than grace of office

* Minutes of 1821, p. 15.

to preach and administer the sacraments. It is no more than simply an official declaration by the Church that the candidate is authorized by Christ himself now to proceed in the work of the ministry. A recognition of what supreme authority in the kingdom orders must be always declarative only by a faithful ministry that is already in exercise. The ministration of the Spirit alone is "glorious," and the ministry of reconciliation committed to us can be such only as it is hidden and subservient behind that lustre. We make it known that we are sent only, and that we send others only as God sends them to take part in this ministry with us, using no power and authority on our part but that of attestation.

8. Representative authority is exhausted in this imposition of hands. It is instrumental in sending a minister into the whole field with a general commission, but to localize him or assign him to a particular place as the pastor of a special flock and fold there must be installation at a special suffrage of the people. Here is the pure democracy of Church government, and representation is not needed more than to guide the will of the people. Wherever it is convenient for all the members of the church, male and female, who have come to the years of discretion, to assemble themselves in choosing a pastor, there the popular element must be signalized with peculiar distinctness according to the scriptural examples collated before. Each particular church may have a life and character peculiar to itself, a taste and judgment which must be allowed to select the man who is deemed the best fitted for service therein. The governing Presbytery has to see that the catalogue from which a minister is chosen must be well authenticated; so that the will

of the people, however sovereign and free, shall not be allowed to choose a man to their hurt—one who might lead them astray to another gospel.

Installation, therefore—a subsequent ceremony to that of ordination—constituting the particular tie of pastor and people, as a measure of order differs from it in the more immediate voting of the people for a teaching elder who has been accredited by their representatives to be sound and capable, and also in the supervening declaration by the Presbytery or their commission that the mutual contract of the parties, pastor and people, is approved and ratified. This declaration is made in words, and not in gesture. It recognizes and declares the will of man—pastor and people—while the laying on of hands recognizes and declares the will of God in calling man to any office in the kingdom of grace. His will, indeed, is to be recognized in both solemnities, but grace is emphasized in ordination and providence in installation.

CHAPTER XV.

JUDICATORIES.

A CONGREGATIONAL court for the exercise of government and discipline over the people of a particular church is virtually established in the ordination of ruling elders. Along with the pastor, these are, of course, to be employed, according to the import of their office, in the joint administration of rule. Aldermen must have their council and senators their assembly, and every other derivative, from the name of age among men through all the analogies of good civil government, must have a conventional force in the chief exercise of authority: "Where no counsel is, the people fall; but in the multitude of counsellors there is safety." When so assembled in local jurisdiction of minimum extent, the elders are called a judicatory in general, and a Session or consistory in particular.

That every particular church should have a tribunal of some kind to determine matters of common interest in church-life, and especially discipline, will be conceded wherever Church and State are not united. That the principle of representation requires a tribunal composed of men fairly and freely chosen by the people of its precinct will also be conceded wherever the Church is not a caste or its governors hierarchal. And these concessions are constrained by the dictates of reason and by the precedents of Scripture at the foundation of Chris-

tianity: "elders in every city," "elders in every church" (Tit. i. 5; Acts xiv. 23)—a plurality always—also by the express direction of our Lord (Matt. xviii. 15–20) and by the various injunctions of submission to those who have the rule over any church in particular—plural in number always. 1 Thess. v. 12. The one-man power is precluded from the beginning. Even apostolical power was combined, and not single, in juridical administration during its phenomenal and transitory existence.

Many schemes have been devised, however, to supersede the council of officers in a particular church as notably ordained in primitive times. Leaving aside at present the episcopate of prelacy and other kindred systems which entrust a circuit of discipline to one presiding elder, we may well consider at this place a too prevalent wish of the people to be virtually rid of their own immediate representatives and to confide the government of their church to the pastor alone whose ministry is popular and influence paramount. This tendency revolts from primitive Christianity, hazards the happiness of a pastor, makes him despotic in temper when he likes it or neglectful of grave responsibilities imposed on him against his will and taste. The pastor is unable to govern alone. If he is given to reading and meditation to such a degree as the nourishment of his hearers and the defence of the gospel require, he cannot know the facts and circumstances which must be known to manage a righteous exercise of discipline. His defective knowledge of human nature, his peculiar habits of thinking and feeling, his morbid sensibilities, induced by study and retirement, the false exhibition of character which deceives him so often when he does mingle with

the world in social intercourse,—all these considerations evince that the teaching elder alone is incompetent and oppressed with the government of a congregation.

Even if he were able and willing to exercise discipline alone, he ought not to be trusted without safeguards for the people as well as for himself in a selected bench of counsellors and assessors. It was, in fact, the gradual and silent transfer of such authority from the parish council to their aspiring bishop which made the original change from a constitutional freedom to spiritual despotism and led to the loss of popular suffrage altogether. Synods and councils, to which many historians are so fond of ascribing the progress of clerical ambition and the development of an arrogant hierarchy, would have been a bulwark in every age alike of ministerial parity and popular liberty, as they now are, but for the parochial change in which a representative bench surrendered to the monarchic priest. Ruling elders being reduced to the standing of laymen, superior courts being therefore constituted of clergy alone, and the popular element subtracted thus from all the gradations of ecclesiastical régime, the whole fabric did consequently become a conspiracy against religious freedom, the right of private judgment and scriptural instruction of the people rather than the embodiment of ecumenical wisdom and grace.

Another scheme for the government of a particular church is to have a plurality of elders exercise the oversight without distinction among them into teaching and ruling. Instead of pastor and Session in council—the former a teaching elder and the latter ruling elders—certain branches of Anabaptist independency would have the elders homogeneous, each one both ruler and preacher. "The Disciples," as they are called, followers

of Thomas and Alexander Campbell, have "evangelists" also in the organization, who are understood to be given wholly to the ministry, but only as itinerating ministers, except in large towns and cities. Three-quarters of the century have hardly yet cleared up the practical working of this polity, and the "no-creed" postulate of the denomination eschews definition so warily that we are left in ignorance of the system, and can only speculate upon its outcome and ultimate formation. It is obvious, however, that extremely few particular churches in Christendom can support more than one teaching elder, who is given wholly to spiritual work, as he ought to be, living at the altar and supplied with carnal things by other working hands. A plurality of pastors and teachers to guide one church together must be a ministry without education for the most part, and consequently without force enough to defend the gospel in these days.

Another plan for the government of a particular church, as far as it is governed by officers at all, is to make the deacon a ruler along with the pastor. His official name in this way becomes a misnomer, for it means a servant rather than a ruler, and such invasion of title belongs to a time of confused formation, as in the Church of Scotland when the First Book of Discipline was made, and the modern churches of New England—a *dernier* alternative since the discontinuance of ruling elders there. Although, as we have seen, the term is a general appellative applied to any and every officer of the Church, the utmost precision of meaning is demanded now by the expanding charities of the faithful. It is no time any more to lose a distinct vocabulary for the care of the poor and the service of

tables: "As the Lord hath called every one so let him walk." Distribution has become the supreme necessity of our times, and every officer whose origin and designation both are on this line may not transcend its dignity without unfaithfulness and degradation. Woman will displace him and take the glory.

But the most plausible substitute for a bench of elders to exercise governing authority is the people themselves in a congregation of church-members. This theory of self-government is the main feature of the Independent and Congregational systems, and we call it "theory" because it happens to be seldom or never carried into practice without some adjuvant machinery of pastor, deacons and committee-men to convert the popular vote into a formal registration of their decisions. What we do by others we do by ourselves. This axiom of representation cannot be inverted without being lost. We cannot say that what we do by ourselves we do by others without the initials of tyranny, making ourselves masters of others. Radical freedom and abject slavery are near neighbors. The temple of God upon earth is the visible Church—a building of Christ—and all the analogies of architecture must be at fault if the bottom and the top, the foundation and the tower, the pedestal and the entablature of her columns, are the same in the view of her Builder and the attraction of her people. We look to the people as a basis of church-power on earth; but we look to God, who made and redeemed them, for the authority which works on this basis to shape his designs and keep it as his own. This authority is reposed in the offices which are created and filled by himself, according to his word.

1. The people are not qualified to conduct church

government immediately with their own hands. Many of these are weak in understanding, and more of them are inexperienced, not having senses exercised maturely enough for judging wisely. It is possible, also, and not uncommon, to find members intelligent enough to enjoy the means of grace for themselves and their families disqualified for that calm, patient and discriminating investigation of facts which every trial demands, and much more the right inference from Scripture and reason of what constitutes offence and how it should be censured. Rightly to construe offences and administer the just reprehension requires wisdom and tact which even the ripest minds of the Church do not always possess. Her most gifted preachers themselves are not infrequently as children at the work of discipline; and when we consider that persons least qualified to judge are often most forward to try it, most clamorous and precipitant in the exercise of judgment, there must appear extreme hazard of perversion and mischief in admitting all members alike to judicial or executive voting.

Bodies of men separated from the world to membership in the Church are also well known to be susceptible of management by the skill of a few men—perhaps a single individual whose influence may have been acquired by speech or wealth or family connection or political faction; and one argument from such a member at a particular crisis may suffice to pervert judgment and hurry a whole congregation into rash and iniquitous decision. When responsibility is not official, it is not felt by the many with adequate apprehension; it is diluted as it is divided—infinitesimal as it is measured by the many. Doubtless the sway of prejudice

may pervert the conscience of presbyter as well as people; but the probabilities are incomparably fewer and the damages more easily repaired. There is no appeal in this life from the sentence of a multitude.

And yet such a sentence may be frequently incurred. Such is the liability of popular bodies to bend under the stress of individual power that there is scarcely in existence a popular assembly, civil or ecclesiastical, which is not led for a time by some one dictator or torn into factions by the rival exertion of different aspirants who would be dictators. And when we consider the "emulations" in their mutual envy and jealousy, the bitter disappointment of some and the resentful triumph of others in a petty contention for local ascendancy, we cannot believe that the all-wise Head of the Church has confided the delicate and momentous conduct of her discipline to the many beset with such possibilities. In apostolic times, when the whole body of the faithful was miraculously endowed and elevated to a level of spiritual grace and goodness which was never known before or after, there might safely be made a reference of the Corinthian case and others to "the many" as an ultimate tribunal; and even since the Reformation restored the right of private judgment and popular study of the Bible there might be, with the environment of Puritan faith and manners, an adventure for a time in this way; but these are epochal exceptions in the light of revelation, history, observation and later experience.

Moreover, could we find a congregation as well qualified and free from bias or tumult as any bench of representative elders can be, other objections are weighty. There would be, of course, a want of secrecy, which

many causes demand for safe and profitable issue. Many an offender, instead of being led to repentance by the private dealing of an eldership, has been stung only with carnal shame, overwhelmed with confusion of mind and hardened at length to final impenitence in being exposed at every step of investigation to the idle impertinence of a crowd. Vexatious delay also at one step, and headlong precipitance at another, and blundering reporters at every step, must agitate the popular venue so much that process becomes more troublesome than offence itself, and results in the propagation of scandal more than in the correction of evil. One trial has more than once destroyed a prosperous church.

If this way of discipline be the primitive model, as its advocates allege, it ought to be suited to newly-evangelized countries with special adaptation; for these are the field where apostolic precedent has mainly furnished our lead. Imagine a missionary met with his converts for the adjudication of some difficult case requiring much thought and able investigation of God's word as the chief directory. His people as yet are but little informed and know little or nothing of this word but the simple story of the cross. The truths which belong essentially to their salvation are not casuistical theology in their minds. They are as "little children" exhorted by the apostle John to "walk in truth" and "let no man deceive them." Consultation is impossible in their assembly, and they vote only as the teacher himself directs them. One man's will is the only independence, the native heathen see, in the procedures of discipline. Officers of the church must begin, conduct and close the question for deliberation. Even at the new settlements of our own country the instinct of Con-

gregationalism would seek in a "plan of union" with other forms of government to mix organization and combine its own executive weakness with the strength of more compacted systems until the surroundings of a complete Christian civilization, which it has done so much to produce, will enable it to venture on its own ideal.

2. The inexpediency of governing a particular church by the members themselves, without a representative eldership selected by their votes, may well be inferred from Scripture intimations which are authoritative beyond the presumption of reason or the induction of facts. When the apostle Paul enumerates in the largest catalogue of offices in the New Testament (1 Cor. xii. 28) the specialties of power bestowed on the people for their benefit and service, he says, "God hath set some in the church." The divine appointment is emphatic—"hath set," ἔθετο, the Greek word for official constitution. The distribution also is emphatic—"some," not all—and the recapitulation is so, likewise, in urging distinctness: "Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles?" etc. He does not add, "are all governments?" because every other office, ordinary and extraordinary, did include authority in its very nature, just as we say the teaching elder includes the ruling elder in his functions, while personally and officially distinct from the latter. The entire list is here emphasized as distinct from the people, and "governments" are mentioned as a qualification common to all and by itself, as in the ruling elder, yet one-eighth only in the range of all the specialties of office. Nothing in language could be more conclusive in distinguishing the people themselves,

as a body, from the ruling set over them by divine appointment. "Governments" are "some," not all, among the members, and this word in the original (κυβερνήσεις) comprehends all the varieties of superintending authority in the Church—guiding, directing, judging and enforcing judgment—as one governs a ship at sea.

Another passage of Scripture making a distinction obvious between the rulers and the ruled in church government is (Heb. xiii. 24), "Salute all them that have the rule over you, and all the saints." Surely no translation can be better than these authorized words. Twice in the same chapter this difference between the rulers and the ruled had been made with imperative force. Ver. 7: "Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God;" ver. 17: "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves," etc. It is of no advantage to Independency that these rulers are spiritual guides, and this is the primary sense of the word—going before and leading the saints. For, of course, it is leading with authority which the saints are to "obey," and the connecting "and," which is distinctive also, cannot make the termination of this great book of the canon a drivelling tautology. Take any other familiar text which enjoins obedience and honor to whom honor is due, such as 1 Tim. v. 17: "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor." Can this command be reconciled with the presumption that the people of a particular church rule themselves, and the reverence of their elders must mean respect for those who merely collect and declare the result of popular deliberation and decision? And if, as certain Independent

writers argue, the "honor" here means pay or stipend for the support of their guides, according to the context analogy, "Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And the laborer is worthy of his reward," then the pleasure of the people who rule themselves in threshing may consist in taking "double" pay to themselves! In the light of Scripture as well as of reason this method of church government does really seem to be, as Jonathan Edwards called it, a "confused way."

3. Emblems of investiture indicate power in officiating distinct from that of the people and over them in the Lord. Such was the nominal delivery of keys in the original constitution of the Christian ministry. Matt. xvi. 18; xviii. 18; John xx. 23. Like a steward's badge, worn upon the shoulder of old, designated by the lord of the house for a sign of superiority in a servant for a time, even over children of the family, who share the inheritance; like the sceptre of a kingdom founded on the rights of a people who are precluded themselves from wielding that symbol of authority in the hands of princes by their succession, though the ultimate ownership be that of the people; like the Constitution of our own national government, made by the people and abiding at their will, authorizing investiture at the voluntary suffrage of majorities, while they cannot personally assume office or its prerogatives to themselves at their own option,—is investment with the keys which our Lord originally conferred on his disciples as representatives of the faithful. The people, as a body, cannot at their pleasure take office or exercise its functions, although it belongs to them in its full value, its outcome, protection and usefulness.

It has been objected that the keys were given to Peter upon his confession "Thou art the Christ," etc.—a confession which private members of the Church in any age may make as well, who are therefore equally entitled—in their assemblage, at least—to bind and loose on earth in the exercise of church power. But this presumption is a lame conclusion. Because a function of momentous import was bestowed on one believer when he made a good confession, it does not follow that the same devolves on every believer who makes the same confession. His appointment is not bound by a precedent, for it is sovereign. Occasions are like chaff before the wind, "which bloweth where it listeth." On a subsequent occasion the Saviour asked repeatedly, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?" and for his repeated answers in the affirmative he commissions Peter with repeated emphasis: "Feed my sheep—feed my lambs;" yet it does not follow that the same commission that thus openly restored the apostleship—which it might be supposed he had lost by the denial of his Master—now devolves on every penitent believer who can say with sincerity he loves the Saviour, and loves him more than others, to feed with the authority of a shepherd the sheep and the lambs of Christ.

It has been again objected that "the keys" are not metaphorical of power, but of knowledge and precedence. We may readily admit, as it was customary to deliver a key to the rabbi in token of his initiation, that a secondary and subordinate sense of the figure was of this kind, for so Peter was distinguished from the other apostles in the address to him as a predecessor and representative in being the first preacher to the Jews on the day of Pentecost, and also the first to open up the access

of Gentiles to the knowledge of the gospel. But we cannot exhaust the emblem by this meaning without overlooking the signification of pre-eminent power distinctly given it in Scripture (Isa. xxii. 20): "It shall come to pass in that day, that I will call my servant Eliakim, the son of Hilkiah; and I will clothe him with thy robe, and strengthen him with thy girdle; and I will commit thy government into his hand, and the key of the house of David I will lay upon his shoulder; he shall open and none shall shut, and he shall shut and none shall open." Corresponding to this in the Old Testament we read in the New (Rev. iii. 7): "And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write, These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth and no man shutteth, and that shutteth and no man openeth." The power of Jesus was the preface of inauguration by his hands, and we have the stupendous intimation of this from his own lips in conferring the last great commission before he ascended—"All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations"—that a derived and immanent potency must belong to every office created by his will and filled by his Spirit. Being always representative King of the people he saves, the sceptre is by no means levelled to this community itself in the exercise of authority over them, for it is the essence of true representation to do what the represented cannot do for themselves.

4. Acts of government and discipline are ascribed directly to officers alone, so far as the Scriptures give us examples. The first is admission of members to the visible Church. When three thousand on the day of Pentecost were added to the church after the preaching

of a sermon, it was impossible to hold the deliberations of a congregation to vote them in upon the application of converts, for in that hour of transition from the old to the new economy of membership the faith which belonged to that renovation would follow the elder as usual in suitable organization, to be formally recognized in the body of Christ. Undoubtedly, many believers on him were attached to synagogues which were not wholly converted by the infusion of Christian doctrine and sacraments, and these could not be congregated apart for Christian government until the new consolidation would be settled. Remaining, therefore, under the old government by elders until the new should be adjusted, they would afterward come out with their accustomed regimen along, exchanging only the shadowy faith of the law for the beaming light of the gospel. If Jewish elders did not come with them, Christian elders would be appointed, as the history of first formation attested in sacred records.

The great provisional officers of that primitive time —the apostolic ministry and the ministry of gifts— opened with the keys in their hands, either individually or together as occasion required. When Philip received the many men and women whom he baptized at Samaria, as also the Ethiopian eunuch—when Paul was admitted by Ananias in the city of Damascus, although a society of believers existed there whose consent might have been obtained—there is no evidence that it was sought for or that the vote of any church was needed or desired in any of those admissions; and however transitory the provisional government may have been, it continued long enough to furnish principle and valid application of it for all time, especially manifest in ordination or induc-

tion to sacred office. When "the seven" were elected by the people, they were inducted by the apostles. When Timothy was ordained, it was "with the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery;" when he was instructed, as an officer, to commit the ministry to others, it was with his own discriminating judgment as to their ability and faithfulness. 2 Tim. ii. 2. When elders were to be ordained in Crete, Titus was instructed to do it; and we know that Barnabas and Paul ordained elders in every church they organized.

In evading the force of these examples it has been urged that the original term expressing ordination of elders in every church (Acts xiv. 23), and literally translated "stretching out the hand," must primarily import the action of the people in giving their votes according to the Greek mode of popular suffrage. But, as already seen, the action expressed by the word was undoubtedly that of Barnabas and Paul, and we may add that, with an accusative following, the Greek etymon would make this word express also the gesture of even one or two in authority, designating merely the person or persons appointed. In the parallel ordination of elders, (Tit. i. 5) another word, signifying simply authoritative appointment is used for the transactions of Titus enjoined by the apostle. We claim a compounded action, as alleged in another place, for all due order in appointing church-officers—popular assent openly signified by the direct vote of either first hands immediately or second hands in representative agency, and the authoritative recognition by those already in office. God hath joined these two together, and man should not put them asunder. That election by the people may suffice to invest one with office in extreme cases of impossibility for the

regular succession of office may be admitted because of the superior importance of truth to forms and of the apostolical stress on ability and faithfulness in charging Timothy in the matter of ordination. But this exception only confirms the rule which makes the imposition of hands by official men an ordinary and relative necessity. A deposit so valuable as to require one to break the casket when the key is lost, in order to enjoy it, will require ordinarily on that account a more vigilant preservation of both casket and key. The pretensions of a prelate to communicate from the palm of his hand the secret virtue of an office which no suffrages of the faithful may help to confer cannot be worse at the one extreme than the radical independence of Priestly at the other, who would have only a vote of the people to inaugurate any man in the ministry of Christ.

Brownism, at the birth of Independency, about the year 1580, challenged the laying on of hands as an idle superstition, and proposed the vote of the people instead as an adequate investment with office. John Robinson conducted the experiment with more success, and consigned the best of it to New England, and Joseph Priestly, a century later than Brown, came to try it in Pennsylvania, contending that rational, effective and complete ordination consisted only in the popular suffrage, and that the laying on of hands by those already in office belonged to the times of supernatural endowment, proper only in the conferring of a miraculous gift. Of course the injunction, "Lay hands suddenly on no man," was overlooked in this argument, for it manifestly implies the exercise of discretion, whereas there could be no room for this if it were an immediate gift of the Holy Ghost making gesture

of man the instantaneous occasion of divine power. Moreover, the charisms of primitive time were bestowed in answer to prayer (Acts viii. 15) accompanying the laying on of hands, and we might therefore dispense with prayer also in ordination by a vote of the people if this were sufficient for a consecration to office. Still more, if this were all, an election by the people, reconsidered and reversed, would logically divest the minister of all it had conferred and reduce the officer to layman until he is elected again by some other church in particular.

Such abasement could be prevented only by some conciliary seal representing a communion of churches with one another—a catholic scope of authority in some convention of ministers, distinct from and over the people, of any particular church. Hence the quick translation of Independency to Congregationalism in both hemispheres, and especially in America, and this restored to its logical place in ecclesia the imposition of hands by conventional action of delegates from different churches—Association in Massachusetts, and Consociation in Connecticut. This advance on middle ground between prelacy and Presbytery is good and great, but, we think, is not complete, according to the Scriptures and to common sense, until delegates turn to representatives of the people in the fair and full sense of representation—the trusted light and conscience of chosen men to rule the people while advising them, promoting their best interest, whether it be for or against their own wishes at the time. That remarkable phrase which we have noticed in another connection (Heb. vi. 2)—an important item in the detail of tenets which are fundamental in the Christian system—"the laying on of

hands"—should still be held as a starting-point in Church progress while time endures. The commentary of Thomas Cartwright—that persecuted Puritan of the sixteenth century whom Whitgift hated and exiled—must be recalled and studied in its pertinency and exactness: "By imposition of hands the apostle meaneth no sacrament, in that whosoever believeth that there is not to be a ministry to teach and govern the Church overthroweth Christianity; whereas, if confirmation be a sacrament, as it is not, yet a man holding the rest and denying the use of it might notwithstanding be saved."

The *third* act of power which officers alone may perform is discipline, in the special sense of censure—the authoritative application of the divine word to offences. John xx. 23: "Whosesoever sins ye remit, they are remitted; and whosesoever sins ye retain they are retained." It is to Timothy that the apostle says, "Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses;" and to Titus, "A man that is an heretic, after the first and second admonition reject." These are injunctions for the exercise of discipline, and there is no instance of such injunction to the people. It has been argued against this position that our Lord in Matt. xviii. 17 directs an aggrieved party, when private conference has failed and ample proof has proved insufficient, to gain the offender in reconciliation to "tell it to the church," assuming this to mean an open publication to the people who are members, and as such must be the court of ultimate adjudication. But this meaning of the term "church" must not be taken for granted; there was no such a body of people in existence when these words were spoken. The Jewish syna-

gogue was the visible Church as yet, and there a bench of elders administered discipline, and a tribunal of three elders was familiarly called "the Church" in its representative authority.

Conceding, however, that our Lord spoke proleptically in the utterance of these words for the direction of the Christian Church that he was then founding, we see in the following context, while treating in the same breath of contention over offences, the memorable promise of his own official presence to countenance and bless the smallest plurality of judges that meet in his name: "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." Past, present and future is the tenor of this judicial promise. It was familiar to the Jewish mind from the beginning to understand elders to be meant when the body over which they presided was mentioned. In the thirty-fifth of Numbers it is said that the congregation of the city to which the manslayer and the avenger of blood belonged should judge between them, and yet we know from Deut. xvi., xviii., etc., that the elders did all that was there ascribed to the congregation; and it was their prerogative alone (Josh. xx. 4), and the formula of "standing before the congregation" in judgment is consistent with judgment by the elders only in expressing the publicity of the decision, if not the open process of trial also before the result is announced in public. Even when the "Church" is read in the distinctive Christian sense (Acts viii. 1) it would seem that her officers more than her people carried the name: "At that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem: and they were all scattered abroad, throughout the regions of Judæa and Samaria, except the apostles;"

"therefore, they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word."

Another plea for the exercise of discipline immediately by the people themselves is the example of it in the case of that incestuous offender among the Corinthians. 1 Cor. v.; 2 Cor. ii. The Corinthian people are blamed for not mourning over a flagitious crime; all are commanded, when gathered together, to proceed against the transgressor, and their proceeding is declared to be judicial, and upon the evidence of repentance all are required to forgive and receive him. "Here, then," said Cotton Mather, "is conclusive proof that the people are empowered to exercise discipline." Official authority, however, moved and directed the whole proceeding in that case. This authority was to preside "in spirit" over all the process—the sentence, the excision and the restoration. Intermediate between the apostolic behest and the action required were elders in official standing we may well presume from the planting everywhere and "in every church" that apostolic history has mentioned. These were not superseded, but propelled, by the apostle's mandate in the line of their duty—not mentioned in particular, because they were identified so closely with the people, and especially at that time, when all the elders were immediate representatives of the people in ruling only, and the itinerating ministry of gifts were their preachers.

Even admitting that the people in a body during the apostolic age did exercise discipline with their votes, and not their elders officially, it may have been expedient then, as it is not now, for all members of the church were made capable then, as they are not now, by the endowments of the Holy Ghost, according to the prophecy of

Joel, shed with unparalleled effusion upon her sons and daughters, her young men and old men, her servants and handmaidens. All were a people of gifts in the forming state of the Christian Church, having with them a special ministry of gifts commissioned without ordination, and the transactions of that provisional period, being extraordinary and exceptional, are not binding examples in form, whatever they may be in principle. And the principle in the Corinthian case abides quite evidently now, when a pious people move their officers to duty; so that rulers and ruled are made identical in their obedience to the word of God and exhortation of his ministers.

There is nothing whatever in that example of the Corinthian church to justify the people now in making a tribunal of themselves without adjudicating elders over them in the trial of offences. That all are blamed for not mourning over the offence is no evidence that all were to vote in the exercise of punishment, any more than universal sorrow among the people of a Presbyterian church over the apostasy or scandal of a member is evidence that all the people have like authority in judging and inflicting censure. The effect of such compunction is to remove the offence, not by a popular vote of ejection, but by stirring up the office-bearers to do their duty in the premises. If we are to take the case out of the miraculous category in which the sinner was delivered over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, we must try it by the ordinary principles of interpretation, according to which a synthetic language never discriminates nicely between the principal and the agent, the body and its instruments. "If thy brother," says Moses, "the son of thy mother, or thy son, or thy

daughter, or the wife of thy bosom entice thee secretly, saying, Let us go and serve other gods, thou shalt not consent to him, nor hearken to him; neither shall thine eye pity him, neither shalt thou spare, neither shalt thou conceal him, but thou shalt surely kill him." Deut. xiii. 6. Who would understand by this injunction that the Israelites at large were authorized promiscuously to put the incipient idolater to death without being tried and condemned by the judges appointed? How often were the ancient Hebrews condemned as a people for the maladministration of justice! while it is manifest that the rulers, and not the people, were the immediate transgressors. And thus we might go on indefinitely to show how the people and their governors are identified with each other nominally as well as morally, and historically, though not officially, by representation at the smallest council of the Church as well as at the largest; the church unit and the Church multiplied ecclesiastically one, and a distinct and double honor within awarded to the elders that rule well, and especially those that labor in the word and teaching. The purest democracy is republican both in Church and in State, and its consciousness of this begins at the first conventicle formed, where coequal and independent men unite to designate "some," and not all, to preside or speak or lead in the exercise of any conventional force, legislative, executive or judicial.

CHAPTER XVI.

JUDICATORIES IN GRADATION.

HAVING seen the necessity of a judicial bench in each particular church, constituted of representatives of the people rather than of the people themselves, we are next to inquire about the extent of this representation and whether it may itself be represented in catholic enlargement of space and comprehensive power. Each particular church must be independent of every other if the assembled members, official and unofficial, must have equal power to pass and declare authoritative acts in discipline and rule, because an integer of this kind cannot be extended. Definite extension must be arbitrary and accidental, and indefinite extension impossible. One congregation may touch another on its confines with mechanical action and artificial correspondence, but the corporeity of life in Christ is without live articulation in such a system, and Catholicism is addition more than development, imaginative more than actual and visible. The visible Church was made for expansion; the body of Christ on earth was born for growth and development, which assuredly does not consist in mere aggregation of equal and similar parts, like added to like, one little visibility after another, complete in itself and walled up by its own peculiar covenant until the whole promised land is overspread with bristling parapets like that anterior Palestine which Israel

came to conquer. The ultimate civilization must have a central Jerusalem.

When it is fairly settled that the primary court is representative in the constitution of its Session, we are to consider how much more a consolidated rather than a confederated system of indefinitely wider extent should be constructed. As the suffrage of the people must, of course, become less immediate and more impracticable as the whole body is enlarged, so the representatives of the people increase in number until they are too many for the convenient exercise of power with due deliberation and becoming order. The contraction which is necessary then does not require a well-compacted system to return in its progress to first principles or first hands for a better fitness to rule. It is by no means too remote from the people that their immediate representatives should be themselves represented, and that the second representation also should be contracted to another and another in higher judicatories or commissions for the sake of order, unity and effectiveness. Selection at the very top of this pyramidal structure stands all the more firmly on the broad basis of popular suffrage where it rests, and it is the unrest of anarchy itself, and change of the building to a babel which must run back to the people at every step of the gradation. When Christ is "Head," elementary power in his people derived from him ascends with the building, and is always implied in representative workmen who are "some" of themselves and hold office as a public trust: "The whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love."

Beyond a particular church with its consistory of officers, the gradations which intervene between it and the Head are called in our system the Presbytery, the Synod and the General Assembly. These may be defined as higher and remoter tribunals which hold jurisdiction over inferior judicatories for the purpose of yearly review, trying appeals and deciding on questions of general interest in doctrine and discipline. This decision is judicial, not advisory, unless it be so expressed in its letter, and obligatory as the sound interpretation and application of law—the law of Christ. We hold this gradation of courts in the Church to be necessary for the unity, purity, authority, faithfulness and moral power of the visible Church as required by her Head.

1. The unity of the visible Church must have these courts of review as a reasonable safety. That her great Founder designed her to be one in outward aspect as well as inward spirit is evident from every similitude used by him and his apostles to explain her nature. In the thirteenth chapter of Matthew she is set forth as a kingdom, implying, of course, that in her visible organization and operations there should be the successive subordinations through which the unity of sovereign behests may be conveyed to the multiplicity of subjects. In the eleventh chapter of Romans we have the emblem of an olive tree to represent the same thing. From this good olive the Jews are cut off at present, and the Gentiles, that belonged to a wild olive tree, are grafted in. This, of course, indicates a visible Church relation made and unmade. And, again, in 1 Cor. xii. the Church is compared to a living human body, having various members united in one visible person : " For, as

the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ." And as Christ, the Head, is a visible person—"God manifest in the flesh"—so also must this oneness be visible for a witness to the world that "there is one Mediator between God and man."

Evading the force of these inspired analogies, which indicate unity of some sort as characteristic of a true Church, it has been argued that some other kind of unity than external and ecclesiastical is intended. There is invisible unity, in which all that believe on Christ are connected with one another, as they are with the common Head, by invisible bonds. There is also doctrinal unity, in which all that hold the same great principles of faith and formulas of doctrine are one without any visible organization to watch and constrain adherence. And there is particular unity, in which the members of a particular church and one congregation are so harmoniously united among themselves as to represent, by a specimen or picture, that universal oneness which the Mediator has promised to the future glory of the Church rather than ordained as the pattern of her present conformation.

But none of these conceptions will answer the demand of our proof-texts or the dictates of common sense. The olive tree, for example, cannot represent invisible unity alone, for the casting off of the Jews cannot mean the reprobation of their souls, but the visible separation of their Church-State from legitimate communion with a true visible Church of the New Testament. Besides, the fancied unity which is all invisible, tried by the test of our scriptural metaphor, must upset the perseverance of the saints individually; for if there be such a wholesale and collective excision of the invisible and spiritual

bonds, individual saints must be included in the whole, and of course be liable to a final apostasy. The rage of generalization at the present day, which eliminates from the essential and ultimate idea of the Church all need or thought of organization to be seen, must be cautioned against heresy, which will creep under when the Church of Christ is sublimated so beyond the conditions of redeemed humanity. Body as well as spirit has been redeemed. As each ransomed individual is visible as well as invisible, and the Logos himself wears for ever body and soul upon him, so does the Church he governs. "He is the Head of the body the Church." Body (*σῶμα*) without organization is absurdity in terms.

Nor will this invisible unity answer the emblem of a human body in 1 Cor. xii. There the apostle speaks of diversified gifts, which belonged to the different members then extant and appearing, palpable as the human body itself. But we know from the words of our Lord himself that these same gifts might then and afterward be exercised, without any such invisible union to the Head, by a living faith: "Many shall say unto me, in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name have cast out devils? . . . I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity." Matt. vii. 22, 23. Nor will it answer the emblem of a kingdom (Matt. xiii.), for there is visible and invisible mixture there. It is a field sown with tares as well as with wheat, and left in this mingled condition till the final harvest at the end of the world. Surely, the figure means a visible Church-State, and of course external unity in the structure.

Neither will doctrinal unity alone suffice for the intimations of Scripture, many particular churches adopting,

one after another, the same creed and similar covenants. Sameness is not unity at all in a governmental sense or any proper sense of convergence. A platform without any joint formality of declaration and conventional authority enforcing adhesion is but a signal for multiplied varieties and interminable dissent. Cambridge, Boston, Saybrook, are not exceptions. Still more obviously untenable is the hypothesis of particular unity, the harmony of members in one little or local congregation as a mirror where only we are to behold that magnificent oneness which inspired prophecy predicts and inspired poetry has sung. On this plan the grace of brotherly love is just as complete in a church of thirty as in one of three hundred members; and the feud which would throw a prominent church into fragments abounds only in the spirit of this unity, giving us many unities for one, thus multiplying the mirrors in which the charity of Christendom is reflected. We might as well say that the household of a single family, or even that an individual believer, with the conflicting laws within him between his members and his mind subordinated by the grace of God, making him "the ecclesiastical unit," is an adequate realization of Christian unity in the world; for in Eph. iv. 13 the whole mystical body of Christ is denominated "a perfect man." Unity cannot exist without numbers.

If, then, the unity which God requires of the Church on earth be not merely invisible, doctrinal or particular, we are constrained to believe that a visible co-operation of diversities to evangelize the world, if not an organized compactness in any one form, is the destiny of Christian work and the Christian Church for all time and consummation. The instinct of Puritanism has ever been

this way, notwithstanding the weakness with which it crumbles within. Missions, education, higher and lower and wider progress of reformation, loyalty of patriotism, refinement of morals, attest the excellence of her planting. But in all this the Puritans are glorious by going hand in hand with other Christians, and such co-operation is always more effective in proportion to the completeness of organization in the several constituencies apart which combine to accomplish one great end.

It is no valid objection to the plea for confederated unity in form to allege that it has never yet existed through the centuries of Christian history as a real and absolute catholicism, and, owing to the diversified condition of men as they are separated by climate, character and government, will never be practicable. There is nothing in the nature of ecclesiastical polity when it is made fairly representative, nothing in sectarian bigotry when subdued by divine grace in the life, and certainly nothing in the promises of the gospel and the predicted glory of the Saviour's kingdom, to forbid an expansion of such unity, until it be perfectly ecumenical. The catholic spirit of Christianity must surely be equal to the influence of that civilization she produces and sustains. A congress of all nations might be had, and we have seen within the century how practicable it is for mighty communities that are jealous of one another, and rivals in diplomacy to concert and consummate political projects which involve the destinies of half the globe; and can we believe that the Church of Christ—"the fulness of Him who filleth all in all"—holding so intimately the common Head in heaven, must be less able to manage, by a common conference, the visible interests of that kingdom which can never be moved?

Admitting, however, that such visible unity cannot be ecumenical, must we, therefore, conclude that it should never be national, or even provincial? As well might we say that, because all nations cannot now unite in one form of supreme superintendence, therefore there should be no distinct nationality or confederate government on earth. Because the Church cannot have a general assembly to represent the whole earth in ecclesiastical synod, therefore we should be divided into as many parts as there are congregations, is a lame conclusion—as much as to say that because the secular speculation of men cannot have a concordat to control the world with paramount power every body politic should be cut up into as many principalities as there are cities, counties or corporations of autonomy.

II. The purity of the Church demands these courts of review. The errors of a congregation are more baleful than those of an individual in proportion to the strength which combination or aggregation gives to any contagious evil; and without some bond of union wider than that of a particular church there would be no sanction for truth and holiness beyond the accident of a majority in one congregation. Let the moiety of an independent church be increased by a single vote, and its whole character is changed. The faithful testimony of a remnant almost equal to half of the whole body is overborne and suppressed. The power which yesterday ruled for Christ to-day rebels against him. Discipline is trodden down or turns its edge against the conservators of truth and order. Within the neighborhood of this oppressed minority may be large bodies of true and faithful men whose affinity would secure an overwhelming force upon the side of truth and right if it

could only be one in form as well as in fact; but the accidental erection of a separate house for worship is allowed to sever the adherence of a protesting few even from the prevailing soundness of a vicinage in the body of Christ, and they must either take the leaven of a tainted lump or separate, with the apparent evils and the real disabilities of schism. We must, therefore, have an organization, to discipline congregations as well as individuals, and to arraign majorities no less than minorities for deflection from righteousness and abuse of power.

Opposed to the safeguards which despotism itself might place around the rights of individuals will be the tyranny of masses when there is no redress of appeal. The popular decision, subject to a thousand influences of a fitful and partial nature, is irreversible save by the whims of its own fluctuation. Judicatories in gradation are the remedy. One appeal or complaint after another, each one conducting the aggrieved to a tribunal more enlarged, disinterested and free from local influences which had prejudiced his cause, will be within the reach of every oppressed or neglected member. To this privilege of appeal, which opposes a majority of the whole and better informed to the majorities of a petty and local nature, it is no valid objection to say that any council may err, that the whole lump may be leavened and the general majority itself may be despotic and iniquitous. The probabilities of moral calculation are all the other way, according to Scripture and reason—so much that the common wisdom of men all the world over, and in all ages, when balancing the civil power to which we are subject, finds the ascending steps of resort to courts of larger representation, if not number also, to

be the only refuge and the last vindication hoped for in the present life. Corruption of integrity is always local before it is general, and even when it is general there is hope for the refugee in flying from passion and prejudice even if he cannot entirely avoid pollution on the way or at the end. So it is in every department of judicial or executive power.

But how much more security have we for the exercise of justice in the visible Church, where Christ reigns by the inhabitation of his Spirit as the Spirit of "power and of love and of a sound mind"—where every particular church, as well as every particular bench, in the gradation of Session, Presbytery and Synod, has its own individuality in the distribution of his gifts and influences, and the aggregate expression of all will most likely pronounce fairly the mind of Him who is "Judge of all"! Facts in church history can illustrate this averment. Within the present century the independent churches of New England and the Presbyterian Church of Ireland have been tried alike by the invasion of Socinian heresy. In both countries it began sporadically, in particular churches, by the address of a rationalistic or speculating teacher, winning over, usually, a majority of the parish. But, long since, the Irish Church was purged of this evil by the strong authority of her highest judicatory, while the American churches tainted with this error, and without any appellate jurisdiction over them, have remained, for the most part, in hopeless perversion.

We do not shun here to notice how Synods or councils have been reproached for tyranny in every age, and how much modern historians charge them with subverting the liberties of the people and surrendering power

to the establishment of hierarchical usurpations. It is enough to assert, as we pass, that Synods never proved to be despotic or subservient to despotism until they were dismantled in form and deprived of the popular element, the representatives of the people, ruling elders in their quorum, as the primitive organizations had passed away. When the people ceased to be fairly represented in councils, and these became assemblies of clergy alone, and such ecclesiastics imagined themselves a priesthood in the old Levitical sense, and three orders instead of one, then only did the Church become despotic in all her Synods, and of course her authorities in every form, until even the right of private judgment in her membership was withdrawn from the people.

It is a fact which all men may now see, and which all historians should bring to the front, since mediæval apostasy has been detected and its darkness rifted in every cloud, that assemblies which incorporate representatives of the people, both mediate and immediate, ministers and elders, are the bulwark of popular freedom and the proper equality of men. Systems opposed to this reformation are not much disposed to hold councils at all in the Church. There was no general council called in the Roman Catholic Church for some three hundred years after the Council of Trent, and it has been only in the agony of a crisis in which temporal power is being wrested from the papal grasp or some dogma of spiritual supremacy is in danger of being lost that such councils have been summoned in this generation; and when assembled, the world knows, it has been only to define and to register what despotism had already prepared and determined. So it is with a hierarchy in the Church of England, whose "Convocation," though composed of

ecclesiastics, can hardly be accounted ecclesiastical at all in the proper business of church-power. For some two hundred years it has convened only to be prorogued. It began by the mandate of a civil monarch, Edward I., "for the sake of obtaining subsidies from the clerical body." Its main business was internal taxation; and when the power of taxing themselves was withdrawn in 1644, the privilege of voting for "knights of the shire" was granted instead. The transported hierarchy of England to this country has wisely and nobly made their Convocation—here called Convention—more spiritual in its object and exercises and more conformed to the surroundings of republican freedom. The lay element is delegated here to the spiritual assembly, and the result is seen to be a decided amelioration even of an exclusive arrogancy which otherwise could have taken little or no root in American soil.

III. Investiture of the ministry must be reviewed by authorities over both minister and people. Acknowledged principles of ordination require superior judicatories to watch and guard them. Suffrage of the people must be recognized and approved by those who preside and judge of their votes, and not by themselves alone as both voters and judges. Combined with the popular element must be an official element, according to a relative necessity of order through all ages; and this combination must be scrutinized and reported with wider compass to the great community of believers by a larger representation than the party of ordainers, to indicate that each intrant of the ministry belongs to the whole visible Church as well as to the particular one where he has been authenticated. And when the people have chosen a pastor from those who make trial of their

gifts before them or before others of the Church to certify their competency in good report, there is to be in Congregationalism itself at the present day resort to a ministry outside of the congregation to solemnize the ceremony of induction to the charge. Of course the officers gathered for this duty from the vicinage or elsewhere will exercise their function at discretion, and not as a task imposed merely; but such discretion is a virtual review and control of what the particular church has done in these premises. The congregation, by taking their guides from the hands of overseers in the neighborhood summoned or invited to decide on his fitness, do submit their own most important action to an authoritative revision by another judicatory, no matter what its name, which is higher in the reference and not responsible to them for its action.

IV. The guaranty of ministerial faithfulness demands a judicatory higher than that of any one congregation, else the people may venture to arraign their own pastor and become party, witness and judge themselves; which is manifestly inconsistent with eternal justice and all the ordinary principles of judicial right and safety. He must be arraigned at a higher court and tried by his own peers, and to receive and adjudicate the popular impeachment is to hold jurisdiction over the people, they having already judged enough by making accusation. There is no possible equity which is not accidental in the case without process before another tribunal, and still another, it may be, for escape from passion and prejudice, which are always the worse as they are pent in the confines of one locality. Hence it is that consistency itself between the offended people and their offending minister among independent churches will so often let

the latter go without attempting censure at all, because it is impracticable in such a system, having no appellate sanction to seek or to see. The common remedy against unfaithfulness, or even malfeasance, in office must be the mere dissolution of a contract between minister and people, which obviously fails to attain the ends of discipline if he be unworthy, and must be cruel injustice to him if he be worthy. Dilemma of this kind was surely not seen by the apostle John while peering into the Apocalyptic future of the Church and charging "the angels of the seven churches in Asia." The only reprehension he uttered in writing to any of them was for the positive neglect of discipline; and laxity in this, for want of an adequate and authorized tribunal to enforce it, does not seem to have occurred to his ken at all in any vision. Rev. ii. Vexatious alternative is death to any church, moreover, and the hanging balance must be turned by some casting vote which can be given only by the hand of a presiding superior.

V. The moral power of the Church on earth should have judicatories in gradation as courts of review. Even if a multitude of particular churches independent of one another could unite upon the same platform of faith and the same testimony against error, one after another, also, with unbroken uniformity, how feeble in moral force would be the numeration compared with the energy of one high representative assembly deciding, not by the speech of a solitary agent who could persuade one small meeting after another without being confronted with any rival and opposite opinions, but by the vote of deliberative wisdom, acting under the great responsibility of consultation for the whole body of Christ! There is all the disadvantage of dispersion, obscurity

and accident in the one case, and all the advantage of considerate, conspicuous and concentrated wisdom in the other. And, as a matter of fact, the world is but little impressed with testimony in piecemeal compared with what is pronounced in collective capacity. In all other kinds of organization primary bodies of men seek to converge their power in some general centre of more extended representation; and why should this dictate of instinct and reflection alike have no adequate scope in shaping the visible Church?

It is incomparably more important for the Church than for the State, in exercising its fair moral force, to have a collective expression of its wisdom and as nearly total as can be realized in one representation, for the obvious reason that it is really one body in its connection with a common Head. The nation comes from multiplicity of membership built upon constituencies resting on diversities which may have but little or no community of social life, and a fraction of which may become another nation or body politic in the fullest meaning of nationality. An island as well as a continent may suffice in geographical boundary to make it complete in all the attributes as well as symbols of sovereignty, but not so the Church: she comes from unity and rests on the foundation of prophets and apostles, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone, and every turn of metaphor in revelation makes him the fountain of her life, her influence, her authority, her extension. Out of his fulness, the Godhead bodily, we all receive, individuals and denominations called by his name, grace for grace, until we are made complete in him.

The Church is therefore a dismembered body and a

defective community just in proportion as there is left out of her visible organization any true members of Christ. Her true visibility is not a fence nor a crucible, nor yet a floodgate. More like a tabernacle it is, or ought to be—movable and not destructible, choice and not exclusive, open to all in the outer court, and this not to be trampled down at the rush and dust of concourse. It belongs to the people in common, but is to be handled, in moving, erecting and disparting, only by the divinely chosen tribe in waiting: "When the tabernacle setteth forward, the Levites shall take it down: and when the tabernacle is to be pitched, the Levites shall set it up." This delineation by a figure may describe, but cannot, of course, define, the visibility of Church organization, which baffles outline of the whole, as much as invisibility does the numbering of spiritual varieties. But we see that "all have not the same office." Every individual apart, every family apart, every particular church apart, every local consociation, every general association or conference, apart, every world-wide denomination apart, has its own individuality, its own peculiar unction, its main part to contribute, in the action of the whole body, or it lacks the just moral force of Christ on earth. If "to every one of us grace is given, according to the measure of the gift of Christ," and it is so that every individual soul among the redeemed has its own form and force and symmetry of Christian character, then must there be abatement in the power of the whole when there is formal separation and division in its visible action upon earth without formal co-operation.

Denominations in the same country, educated and evangelical, with like immunities and social influence

and missionary zeal, are conspicuously distinguished for different characters in the body of Christ. Say that the Presbyterian Church distinctively carries the banner of truth; the Congregational Church, the banner of liberty; the Protestant Episcopal, that of order; the Baptist, that of ordinances; and the Methodist, that of gospel aggression. The full and perfect ideal of Christ incarnate which the visible Church is required to express will be found in the combination and interfusion of all these elements in due proportion. The visible encasement of them in one grand "representation of all the churches"—which is not impossible, as it defines our General Assembly, comprising an equal number of diversities that are churchly—would be oneness enough to win the world to Christ and seem to be a second coming of his person; and until it is attained let us anticipate the coming by rounding the completeness of such assemblage and interfusion among ourselves of each denomination concerned. And the highest and best altitude for observation with a view to the ultimate unity of all is reached by ascending the grades of representation to the summit of Presbytery, and there looking for the Son of man to come in his kingdom.

Scripturalness of Judicatories in Gradation.

Preliminary to the more direct evidence that courts of review are divinely sanctioned is one inquiry, at least, respecting the numbers gathered, especially at Jerusalem, in the planting of the Christian Church there and elsewhere. It is clear that many more belonged to that church than could be connected in one and the same congregation for the purposes of a particular church, whether worship or discipline. This being evinced,

whatever of unity in the way of ecclesiastical procedure the sacred narrative reveals will go to establish the principle of one superintendence over different churches.

Without extending our inquiries to Antioch, Ephesus and Corinth, where we might obtain similar illustration, though less unquestionable, we may be satisfied with grouping the facts on record respecting the formation at Jerusalem. Before our Lord had finished his work there must have been many thousands about Jerusalem openly or secretly attached to his cause. Of the ministers only who had waited on his instruction, and whom he sent forth, it was said by their foes that the world had gone after him. After all the offence of his crucifixion, and the defection and dispersion it occasioned, there must have been five hundred, at least, adhering at his resurrection. To this number three thousand were added on the day of Pentecost. It is vain to allege that these conversions occurred among the foreign Jews or strangers who were merely on a visit for the festive occasion and formed no portion of the settled inhabitants. The Israelites generally who belonged to the Dispersion did not attend the festivals at Jerusalem ordinarily, and the Jews occasionally resorting could not have made the multitude whom Peter addressed, and whom he charged as participants in the murder of Jesus. He "lifted up his voice" and called them dwellers at Jerusalem, and not sojourners merely—a different word in the original. Even if they had been born abroad, they were now citizens there, attracted by the religious advantages of that metropolis: "There were dwelling at Jerusalem, Jews, devout men out of every nation under heaven." Acts ii. 5.

But, large as the first accession was, under apostolic

preaching an increase continued in the same proportion: "The Lord added daily to the church of such as should be saved." After another sermon by Peter (Acts iv.), we are told, many of them who heard the word believed, and the number of the men was about five thousand. How many more in the families of the men were added we may well conjecture from the proportion of women who waited for the coming of Messiah and signalized their prompt and persevering faith when it was the very darkest hour and most perilous adventure to believe. But, taking the men alone, we have now at least eight thousand five hundred members in the church at Jerusalem. Yet after all this we are told that multitudes both of men and women were added by the miracle at the death of Ananias and Sapphira, and still afterward, we read, the word of God increased and the number of disciples multiplied greatly, and a great company of the priests were obedient unto the faith. And how many of the people must have gone with this leading of their priests may be inferred from the language of their enemies, who, speaking of the apostles, said, "They are filling Jerusalem with their doctrine," Jerusalem being at that time the most populous city in the world, according to Josephus.

Here, however, it is objected that these gathering thousands must have been scattered away from the city by persecution which raged at the death of Stephen (Acts viii.), and consequently we have no data for believing that more were left at Jerusalem than were sufficient for a single congregation and a particular church. But we answer—(1) That there is no evidence of that persecution being continued beyond a single day. The sacred historian Luke is remarkably precise in the use

of words expressing time. When the duration is indefinite or uncertain, he says "about" that time. But here he is exact, saying "at that time" when "Saul was consenting to the death" of Stephen (ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ), as if the sudden violence of a mob instigated by one wishing to "make havoc of the church" was the nature of that persecution. (2) It has been noticed previously that the scattered ones of the occasion were probably ministers of gifts made prominent and obnoxious by the notability of their preaching: "They went everywhere preaching the word." ver. 4. (3) The original word for "scattered" here means voluntary as well as violent dispersion, for which the Greek has another term distinctly, and in this place it seems to express precisely the obedience of ministers to their Master's bidding: "When they persecute you in one city, flee ye to another." (4) The Jews who constituted the persecuting mob had no power at the time to inflict the punishment of death, and the murder of Stephen was refractory offence to the Roman as well as cruel intolerance to the Christian. For alleged offence against their own law they might incarcerate only, at the worst; but all the prisons of Jerusalem could not then contain the multitudinous converts of Christianity. Devout men remained free to carry Stephen to his burial.

We are told after this and the persecution by Herod that "the word of God grew and multiplied," and such was its triumph that the apostle James said to Paul at Jerusalem, "Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe," in corresponding reply to the recital of success among the Gentiles. The emphasis of "thousands" here is myriads in the original—a number indefinitely large, and never less than ten

thousand—wherever it is used elsewhere in the New Testament. Even the number of ministers to be noticed in Jerusalem as identified with that locality must indicate indefinite myriads of disciples apparently there. The body of apostles engaged in preaching so busily as not to have time for distribution of alms to the poor must have had more audience collectively than the largest house in Christendom at this day could accommodate with room. Added to apostles must have been a large number of gifted ministers—prophets, evangelists and elders, including, as some conjecture well, the whole seventy whom our Lord had sent forth to usher his own ministry in Judea. That a multitude of such preachers, numbering a hundred at the lowest calculation, should be confined, with all their missionary ardor, to one congregation is utterly incredible. The same inference is made more decidedly when considering the many languages spoken in their ministrations. Devout men of Parthia, Media, Elam, Mesopotamia, Cappadocia, Pontus, Asia, Phrygia, Pamphylia and the parts of Libya and about Cyrene, and also of Rome, Crete and Arabia, heard in their own language the wonderful works of God. No one dialect was ever known to be intelligible to such diversity of auditors, and no miracle of tongues had been wrought if the preaching there and then were done through interpreters.

These facts alone suffice to prove that the church at Jerusalem must have been more than one congregation meeting in one place, hearing one preacher at a time, organized in one body of all the people discipled for the exercise of worship, discipline or deliberation on questions of moment in relation to Christian doctrine, polity or life, even if, instead of private and upper

chambers to meet in, they had the space of a camp-meeting for an area of sacred transactions. When we read in Acts ii. 41–47 that "all who believed were together, and had all things in common," we cannot understand more than a community visible in mutual intercourse of intimacy and sympathy and temporal benefaction. When we read in Acts iii. 11 about "all" the people running together in "Solomon's porch," and "all" being there with one accord, we see that this noun of multitude means only a promiscuous resort of the people to the apostles there to see and hear the wonders wrought by them, the "one accord" being among the apostles themselves, without the slightest indication that such assemblage was churchly in its meaning or significance.

Nor is there any force in the objection that they were all in one place to elect deacons at the direction of the apostles (Acts vi.); for, besides the fact that this was done while the community was comparatively small, it was not necessary that electors should signify their choice in one spot, or that they are to be considered one particular church in doing so, any more than the meeting of men from different villages at the same election precinct in the civil commonwealth proves them to belong to one ward or corporation. It is not necessary to the conception of different particular churches in one city that each one should have its own board of deacons. If the whole Christian Church existed for a time before the reconstruction of a diaconate by the apostles, we can easily see how one board might serve a number of particular churches in one city, as for a time in modern history at Geneva, Edinburgh and Glasgow.

In view of pertinacious and minute objections like these

on the part of Independency, it may well occasion surprise that able and distinguished apologists for Christianity should be willing to surrender at any point of divergence from historic churches one of our strongest defences against infidelity. The rapidity with which the gospel, in its first promulgation, triumphed over prejudice and pride, ignorance and learning, power and multitudes, in winning converts to Christ, is a chief bulwark on earth for him and his cause, which must be greatly impaired by the scanty planting at Jerusalem, where it began, if but one congregation there could be made out for a purpose after twenty years of renowned success in gathering members by the labor of apostles, and of scores of ministers besides, actuated by the ordinary and extraordinary power of the Holy Ghost in their preaching, polity and discipline.

The evidence being irresistible that the church in Jerusalem was too numerous to constitute but one particular church for the purposes of worship in one house and government by the joint and immediate voting of the people, we come to see that unity both in worship and in government must have been by representation organized in office and assembly of officers. Hence the significant singular number, "church," invariably used, to denominate the gathering myriads evangelized in that great city. We never see mentioned the "churches" in Jerusalem, but nine times we read of the "church," and twice the "whole church," there. This means an organized unification. No mere fraternization for counsel or advice would thus be denominated invariably as an unit. No convocation of all the people could have made the record which inspired history has transmitted of harmonious transaction and instant despatch that characterize

in every age the bench of a court or the conventicle of choice representatives. No association or consociation of independent churches would ever drop the plural from rolls of their constituency. The convergence of democracy in one title must always make it representative.

Happily, the inference we make from the facts already cited has been confirmed and illustrated by the example of a synod or council held at Jerusalem and recorded by the highest of all authority in the ministration of the Spirit. It is found in Acts, fifteenth chapter. This exceedingly valuable and suggestive record furnishes the great principle of gradation in judicatories as well as their constitution by representatives of the people; and it should be carefully premised that the principle is all we need to consider in this contention. The ratio of representation must always be naturally and historically a changeable quantity; it could not be adjusted for all places and times to come in the forming state of the Church. And even the constituents of the judicatory itself may have been somewhat irregular in the excited and tumultuous agitations of the primitive age. "Brethren" without office or special appointment may have pressed into the deliberating assembly to speak and to vote also while as yet no rules had been formulated to discriminate the proper commission of members or the method of proceeding. Especially when we consider the intensely interesting subject for which mainly the assembly was convoked, the singular diffusion of gifts among unofficial church-members, and the peculiar blending of all believers with their teachers in the character of "a royal priesthood," which that initial age exhibited, we cannot wonder if other elements

mingled with "apostles and elders" in the quorum and the vote of the first General Assembly held at Jerusalem.

But even this natural explanation of the term "brethren," occurring once in the phrases which enumerate the components of that assembly, should not be reckoned exceptional irregularity at all or a promiscuous mingling of men without orders in the memorable first meeting of a synod at Jerusalem. For, beyond question, a varied ministry was now in the field, ordained *de facto* by the endowments of Pentecost, deputies of the apostles settling others in ordination without settling themselves, representing missionary work emphatically, coming in to report more than to vote, interested in the opening sessions of the council more than in the subsequent debates, privileged to come and to go according to the docket more than according to rules of order. Hence the term is used in this connection as it is in 2 Cor. viii. 23: "Or our brethren be inquired of, they are the messengers of the churches, and the glory of Christ." Even private and unofficial believers were clothed with representative function when sent as messengers from one church to another, and undoubtedly "the Church," and "the whole Church," consisting of believers in Christ, must have made their influence felt and respected, as it is actually noted in the record by such phrases. Be this as it may, the constitutional assemblage was ministers and elders (ver. 6), "The apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter," precisely as the reference had been made at Antioch to the general assembly under this form of designation for the component members.

The reference was brought up to that council by the hands of Paul and Barnabas, and "certain other of

them." It was a crucial question of that crisis in the Church, involving the rights and duties of Gentile converts and the breaking down of the middle wall between Jew and Gentile. Whether they should "keep the law of Moses" and be circumcised as well as baptized in order to be saved was the question which certain travellers from Judea forced into a debate with Paul and Barnabas at Antioch, and after "no small dissension and disputation" there it was "determined that Paul and Barnabas and certain other of them should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question." Here was a smaller portion of the Church sending commissioners to a larger, a lower judicatory to a higher, a representation of some to a "representation of all the churches." The very same constituents of authority existed at Antioch as at Jerusalem. With Paul, an apostle, were associated "prophets and teachers," including Barnabas and "certain other of them," who were probably ruling elders, all presbyters in rank, "apostles, elders and brethren"—a church, indeed, but not the whole Church. A question of so much importance was ecumenical just then, and needed a general council, not only for collective wisdom in the decision, but for universal unity in the acceptance.

These commissioners "were brought on their way by the Church," reporting the conversion of Gentiles as they travelled and diffusing joy wherever they lodged on the journey—a picture, this, which recalls the experience of ministers and elders in past generations here as they pressed on to the General Assembly, when travelling was slower and hospitality livelier than at present. And the likeness of that errand to Jerusalem in primitive times may well suggest the identity of Presby-

terianism as it proceeds from the lower and limited jurisdiction, where a case originated, to the highest representative tribunal for a final decision of the visible Church. These commissioners from Antioch, it is apparent, had seats among "the apostles and elders" of that original council and participated in deliberations, just as now representatives from a lower judicatory, coming to be seated in a higher, may freely discuss and vote on a reference they bring, while precluded from voting on appeal and complaint in which they have been originally interested; and when a conclusion was attained by the Assembly, the report of it was formally returned to Antioch, not by the representatives only, Paul and Barnabas, who had carried up the overture, but by chosen men of "their own company" along with these brethren, that the latter might not be challenged or suspected of gaining a partisan triumph in the decision, and not that they should be considered as a different party from the council itself. For the letter of promulgation identified them, as members of the body assembled, "with our beloved Barnabas and Paul."

The decision itself must prove that it was reached by a representative assembly and governing "company" rather than by a crowd of public and private members together at Jerusalem. It was not an advice merely of one church to another, or of one association of independent churches to another, which might be freely accepted or declined, but an injunction of declarative authority in the Lord, binding upon all Christendom as then constituted. Apostles were members component by divine appointment; prophets were members by the demonstration of gifts from the Holy Ghost; elders were members by delegation from the people, with whom

is the residuary deposit of power on earth, and whom all officers that are not usurpers must represent through every age. Enactment by such a composite assemblage may well be presumed authoritative in the way of decree as much as of counsel, and more. Hence in the next chapter (Acts xvi. 4) that decision is called "decrees" (*δόγματα*)—"the decrees that were ordained of the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem." Stronger language could not be used to denote authoritative deliverance. The term rendered "decrees" is found in four other places of the New Testament, in every one of which it expresses enactment by governing authority. Twice it expresses edicts of the Roman emperor and twice the ordinances of the ceremonial law, which, of course, had been more imperative than advice or admonition. It is used by "the Seventy" for the mandates of Nebuchadnezzar, the decrees of Darius and the laws of the Medes and Persians, and the participle used with it here, and rendered "ordained," is used twice in this book of Acts to denote the authority of the Jewish Sanhedrin, and by "the Seventy" to translate the judgment of the Persian council in degrading Queen Vashti from royal elevation. No words of any language, probably, have ever been more uniformly employed to express command by competent authority or injunction by legitimate supremacy in Church or State.

The provisional nature of the decision does not by any means abate the stringency of its behest, but rather enforces it. There was an exigence to be met everywhere in its promulgation. As the virulence of a spreading distemper must be met by the instant cognizance and utmost exertion of power in counteraction, so the prejudice of expiring Judaism had to be noticed

and charitably countervailed just then; and the peculiar weakness of Gentile morality as well had to be specially admonished then, and advice only would have been but straw to leviathan. There must be the interposition of spiritual power with imperative cogency to direct the conscience of both Jew and Gentile—for a time, at least, until the charity and piety of Christian life, rather than special and precise restrictions, would come to sway the government of principles: "For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things." Surely the church-power which could make a provisional obedience "necessary" and the same wherever churches were planted on the globe may still exist, and must exert itself as need may be in the authority of teaching and ruling, when the refinement in ethics will consist in the sanction of principle more than in the enforcement of sumptuary laws, which seldom lay an axe to the root of an evil tree.

If it be objected that a council of extraordinary ministers and members at the cradle of Christianity should not be strained as a model for succeeding ages and all countries in the progress and development of the kingdom, we may answer that the constituency of all time in the Church was there, and represented by elders as an integral part of the assembly. Subtract the extraordinary ministers—apostles, prophets and evangelists—and the Church element of power through all the ages before and after may remain surely to rule when the other classes shall have done their specific work and dropped their mantle on the presbyters in ascending. As we have been at pains to prove on the preceding pages that the work of apostles distinctively was to bear witness to Christ of what they had seen and heard of

him in personal intercourse, and that supplementary to such testimony was a ministry of gifts to give it force and promulgation, and that the power of polity they had consisted mainly in identifying the elders of the future with the elders of the past and making the whole machinery of synagogues Christian, by simply introducing the Christian word and sacraments wherever a synagogue could be converted in whole or in part, so this eldership stands perpetually, and inherits all the promises made in the covenant of old pertaining to the fulness of time, and all the prerogatives and immunities bestowed on the body of Christ by his own eternal Spirit as the Spirit of truth, holiness and power.

Such a council was evidently justified in using the Greek formula of expression for sovereign authority and binding force: "It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us." This verb (*δοκέω*) is the common term for autocratic determination among the Greeks. Demosthenes used it in expressing the supreme authority of the Senate, and Plato in describing the inexorable certainty of death. It was used familiarly by Josephus and others to express the decretive power of the Jewish Sanhedrin, opposition to which was punished by death: what "seemed good to them." But the objector will say that here it is the supreme authority of the Holy Ghost which prompted those decrees and constrained with miraculous guidance the decision to be promulged. That the result of this deliberation was not by supernatural afflatus of the Spirit, but by that ordinary teaching and leading of his people in every age representing the presence of Christ in every assembly, either for worship or for government, without which there is neither clear deliberation, sound judgment, acceptable worship nor

effective government, must be evident by the following considerations.

(1) The human element is blended here with the divine: "It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us." When it was otherwise expressed in the Old Testament, as "holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost," it was "Thus saith the Lord," and "Thus say we" was never added. We are only and altogether passive when his energizing power comes upon us with supernatural dictation; and even when it seems good to us in co-operating with him in the building, it is "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts." Every decision ecclesiastical, by ministers and elders, till the end of time, which is agreeable to the word of God and in harmony with the exigence and season of his good providence, may record the same thing as "good to the Holy Ghost and to us."

(2) There was no need for that reference and journey and large representation assembled at Jerusalem to deliberate on the question if it were not human with divine upon the record; for the decree of Paul himself at Antioch—who subsequently said, "So ordain I in all the churches"—would have been as good as the whole twelve at Jerusalem in declaring the mind of Christ, if the immediate afflatus of the Holy Ghost were alone the organ of that result, a "necessary burden" imposed on all the churches.

(3) The fact recorded of "much disputing" in the council before the decision was made evinces the rational exercise of man's own faculties of speech and logic under the gracious guidance of the Holy Ghost, as now, and in every age of proper ecclesiastical assemblies; for a supernatural dictation of the Spirit, without any concurrence

of our own rational judgments, would preclude dubiety and all disputation.

(4) The nature of the decision itself was compromise, which is always human, the natural exercise of common sense and Christian charity, and means the imperfection of man's judgment on one or both sides of a controversy. Between Jew and Gentile—the legal James and the liberal Paul—the fallible Peter makes the deciding speech and suggests the sentence which James pronounced in formula. Provisional expediency is not supernatural and needs no special afflatus of inspiration from on high. The right motives and the warrantable end are of God, as he inspires the one and guides the other, but the precise adjustment is left to human reason as enlightened by the gospel. The inveterate prejudice of Jews and the licentious impurity of Gentiles must both be held in as with a bridle when the brotherhood of man is dawning and the orb of universality for the gospel is rising. Things indifferent in themselves, meats offered to idols, things strangled and blood must be abstained from with Christian charity, which ordinarily concedes something to the weakness of superstition for a time; and things of gross immorality, as fornication, must be instantly restrained and mortified until the law of life in Christianity shall have diffused the holiness of Christian principle, uprooting such abomination for ever. This burden of charity and self-denial the Gentile converts would gladly accept, instead of the ceremonial yoke of Moses, for a help to salvation; and this external conformity and actual forbearance the Jewish converts would gladly accept as better homage to their civilization than any forced submission to a yoke which neither they nor their fathers were able to bear. All this arrangement

was made by the competency of human reason enlightened by the Holy Ghost and propelled by those gracious influences which he continues to shed upon "a representation of all the churches" through all the ages, in which "the word of God is not bound," and in which prayer is made continually for the presence of Christ in the midst of assemblies convoked by his authority.

Such, we think, is a fair analysis of that primeval assembly which the Presbyterian Church has copied with so much uniformity as the model of gradation for judicatories now and the essential supremacy of representation at the highest ascent of church-power on earth. A question of great importance which could not be settled at Antioch, where a perfect organization of Presbytery existed, though comparatively small in jurisdiction, is voted and sent as a reference to another assembly, of higher authority, because of larger representation—"the whole Church." There the question was accepted and amply discussed, where debate would have been precluded altogether if the decision had waited only on a supernal fiat of the Holy Ghost instead of the exhaustive parlance of his ministers, whom he supplied with wisdom on that occasion, as he does on every occasion, of assemblage and prayer in the name of Christ. The decision itself was approximate and provisional, a measure of expediency, a pastoral of conciliation, in which the twin graces of charity and self-denial were to usher the unity of Christendom before imperial persecution would come to lay it waste. Yet this tentative rather than radical deliverance was more than advice returned to the church at Antioch, which the latter might either accept or decline. It was imperative—a decree of binding obligation, a necessary burden for all the churches

to bear along with Antioch. The strongest words of sovereignty in the exercise of power, and the signet of the Holy Ghost as the Spirit of "power and of a sound mind," prohibited the disobedience. Here was the development of a central force of life in the whole Church, and not merely the flow of sympathy among its accretions. The body of Christ, "fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth," lifted up once for all its ecumenical aspect for the issuance of a provisional decree to quiet a local disputation and order away the rubbish of that broken "middle wall of partition" which Christ's incarnation came to remove.

And if expediency for the time could issue thus from the whole Church with plenary sanction of law to bind all the churches, how much more must the formulation of eternal truth in true definitions and right applications bind the respect and approval of the churches represented in the highest assembly of any denomination that is Christian! And how much more secure must be the rights of individual members when the same high court is appellate in the review of discipline and correction of disorders below! The oracle of that inspired record on which we have commented is indeed a "lively" one to the end of the world, and its forceful import is already telling on prelacy itself. Centuries have passed with episcopal domination excluding a representation of the people from council with the bishops in their conclave. Now, it is found that "the Church of the future," as well as the long past, cannot gather and tax the people without representation, and that as a component of the innermost and uppermost councils no less than benches at the gate or in the outer courts of the temple.

It is well to have the necessity of an appellate judicatory of any sort conceded, but the problem of its construction with the sacerdotal caste of orders resting on tradition without suffrage of the people must be a difficult one wherever the right of private judgment is not overlaid.

This argument for a system of judicial administration in the Church might be greatly extended. The analogies of good government among men are ever at hand to help us with proof and illustration. Disintegration is anarchy wherever there is higher unity of power to claim a common jurisdiction; and when Christ himself is the one supremacy, and he prays and works by his Spirit to have all the bodies of men throughout his kingdom exchange their independence for his law, their local autonomy for his universal code, their detached affinities and separate sympathies and accidental proportions for his embodiment of all in the representation of all on matters of truth and right and righteousness,—we cannot refuse to work with him in judicatories rather than in conventions, decisions which remain to bind us rather than in resolutions which vanish into thin air.

Congregationalism in Connecticut appreciated in good measure the underlying principles of such a system when it organized that Consociation of churches which has largely warded off the defections of creed occurring in Massachusetts, and recognized a Presbyterian motto with an imperfect reproduction of our system: "*Quod tangit omnes, debet ab omnibus tractari* ("What affects all should be managed by all"). We may range about this vantage-ground the many formulas of God's own word by the lips and pens of inspired apostles: "We being many are one bread and one body;" "There should be no schism in the

body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it." These expressions, and others like them, certainly denote organization in which mutual rights and mutual sympathies do circulate as blood in the veins and arteries of a living body, distributing the blessedness of communion with perfect intimacy to the inmost issues of ransomed nature, and not by way of contact on the outward surfaces of like but different bodies, congeries and contagion rather than development of one heart in the pulsations of Christian sympathy. After the enclosure of one particular church is completed its relation to another of like nature is outside, and only another consideration, as an after-thought, in the scheme of Independency; whereas in Presbytery the relation of one church to another is innate and born at the inception of either, and all addition or extension of number is growth more than count, according to the Scriptures. "Fulness" begins addition here. "Who is offended and I burn not?" exclaimed the apostle Paul when he said, "The care of all the churches cometh upon me daily." Total instead of local sympathy, a field of church-planting wide as the world instead of the vicinage or providence which bounds the radiation of any particular church in isolation, would seem to be in the mind of this great apostle as a characteristic of "the whole Church," a "body fitly joined together," so as to make increase of the body to the edifying of itself in love. Hence the soundness of the whole body is the main curative agency for the healing of partial distempers in any of the parts or members. This great analogy of medi-

cal jurisprudence, more and more evinced in scientific progress, may surely avail us in application to the body of Christ, where all the members are "compacted by that which every joint supplieth," and derive their life and health from a common head by living ligaments, which make articulations, instead of by the mere juxtaposition that helps by accident or mechanical device.

In correlation with this gift of healing with which Presbytery is endowed is the exercise of right also. As in a living body "the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you," so these "more feeble" members necessarily acquire a claim for direction from the eye and animation from the head in the motions of life. The extinction of an eye or a blow upon the head, therefore, must be damage and wrong done to these inferior members and their actuated obedience. In plainer words, no particular church in this body of Christ has a right to deny the divinity of Christ and so leave all the other members of his body without an adequate Head, and consequently injured in the derivation of influence and vitality, grace for grace, until we are made complete in Jesus. Hence the authority of discipline arises in governmental forms for the repression and restraint of pernicious evil. And even the law of nations may control the world by the analogy of this principle borrowed from the law of Christ. No multiplication of small democracies without the unity of system and central power in a great republic could have proclaimed in the morning of this century that no despotism of the Transatlantic world shall henceforth plant its foot among our neighbors on the continent we inhabit. These neighbors have no right to do as they please in the premises when the

safety of one nation is at stake in the destiny of another beside it. The mission we have from the God of nature and humanity to fulfil as a nation could endure no conterminous propagandism at war with its own cherished principles.

In like manner, no single church or association of churches should be let alone to disseminate contagious error on the borders of general soundness in the faith, and only that constructure of the Church in a system which brings the sanity of a whole body to bear upon the disease or defection of any particular part is competent to save the whole body from corruption and apostasy. Withdrawal of fellowship is not enough of sanction for moral condemnation. Although it may seem virtually the same, in effect, as the censure even to excision "inflicted by many," it lacks the force of a positive and formal sentence by constituted authority, so essential to the ordinance of judicial discipline. Wherever the rulers and the ruled are identical in authority, and those "who are over them in the Lord" are actually under the people in the ratification of everything proposed by the officers, there can be no conclusive government or adjudication.

When our Congregational brethren move to arrest the propagation of Socinian heresy or another probation for the heathen after death, and every method of countervailing effort by discussion and review has failed to stop the mischief and reconcile opinions, their last resort is the first resort of Presbyterianism, in such cases—a council composed of representation from various and many particular congregations. Yet no decision according to the fundamental tenets of church polity in that denomination can be made by the council more conclusive than

the persuasion attempted before it was convoked at all. It is only advice—made more impressive, indeed, by the force of majorities voting—but no definitive decree to bind the conscience of parties concerned in the debate beforehand, like that necessary burden laid on all the churches by the council at Jerusalem. And it is not even accepted advice until it is ratified in detail by each congregation apart, and perhaps incorporated in the covenant and creed of the people themselves in each particular charge. "Progressive orthodoxy" in this way of bootless agitation, fluctuating change and indeterminate conclusion must be, in the long run, a memorial of dissipated strength in the kingdom of our Lord.

So near akin is Congregationalism to us in the liberty and right of private judgment, and in the traditions of a second Reformation at Westminster, and the intertwined activities of religion which laid here the foundations of a republic in civil government, we "suffer" with such a sister, and deplore the waste of learning and piety in such economy at our side, through fear of a phantom, which, in the eyes of Congregational Independency, ever shadows the progress of Presbyterian church government. This phantom is the spiritual despotism they see in conciliary dogmas of decision, enforced without being first accepted, as if no tyranny were to be met in the doings of a popular mass in excited congregation which is responsible to no paramount authority over its transactions, and in which there can be no ruling but proposal for the deliberation and enactment of the people themselves. Escape from the tyranny of a majority in one congregation has no refuge provided in which local majorities are held re-

sponsible; and spiritual anarchy is encountered in that spontaneous arbitration outside which would redress the grievance done by inside independence. How much less perilous to liberty and right is the gradation of constituted courts in our system, through which the injured or aggrieved may prosecute their cause with better hope at every step of the complaint or appeal that a higher tribunal, more enlarged in representation and remote from the local influence which had prejudiced the right, will eventually honor truth and justice with an adequate vindication!

The comparison made in England over two centuries ago between Presbytery and Independency, when the latter was advocated by able and godly men competing for the ascendancy of their system, both by debate in the Assembly of Divines at Westminster and by the countenance of Oliver Cromwell at the head of the Commonwealth, may reveal to us the steadiness of the one and the changeableness of the other as we come down to the present day. The following tabulation was made by a faithful hand about the time that discussion, both in the Assembly and in the Parliament, had exhausted the subject and sharply defined the relative positions taken:

INDEPENDENT.	PRESBYTERIAN.
No other visible Church of Christ is acknowledged, but only a single congregational meeting in one place to partake of all ordinances.	One visible Church of Christ on earth is acknowledged, and all particular churches and single congregations are but as similar parts of that whole.
The matter of their visible Church must be, to their utmost judgment of discerning, such as have true grace—real saints.	The matter of the Church invisible are only true believers, but of the Church visible persons professing true faith in Christ and

INDEPENDENT.	PRESBYTERIAN.
	obedience to him according to the rules of the gospel.
Their churches are gathered out of other true visible churches of Christ, without any leave or consent of pastor or flock; yea, against their wills, receiving such as tender themselves—yea, too often by themselves or others, directly or indirectly seducing disciples after them.	Parochial churches are received as true visible churches of Christ and most convenient for mutual edification. Gathering churches out of churches hath no footsteps in Scripture, is contrary to apostolical practice, is the scattering of churches, the daughter of schism, the mother of confusion, but the stepmother to edification.
Preaching elders are only elected, not ordained. Ruling elders also preach.	Preaching elders are both elected and ordained. Ruling elders only rule, preach not. 1 Tim. v. 17.
The subject of church government is the community of the faithful. The church-officers act immediately as the servants of the church, and deputed thereby.	The subject of church government is only Christ's own church-officers. The church-governors act immediately as the servants of Christ, and as appointed by him.
All censures and acts of government are dispensed in single congregations ultimately, independently, without all liberty of appeal from them to any superior church assembly; so the parties grieved are left without remedy.	All censures and acts of government are dispensed in congregational Presbyteries, subordinately, dependently, with liberty of appeal, in all cases, to presbyterial or synodal assemblies, where parties grieved have sufficient remedy.
There are acknowledged no authoritative classes or synods, in common, great, difficult cases and in matters of appeals, but only suasive and consultative;	There are acknowledged, and with happy success used, not only suasive and consultative, but also authoritative, Classes and Synods, in cases of great importance, dif-

INDEPENDENT.	PRESBYTERIAN.
and in case advice be not followed, they proceed only to a non-communion.	ficulty, common concernment or appeals, which have power to dispense all church censures, as need shall require.

It should be noticed in this comparison and contrast—

1. That both parties, Independents and Presbyterians, of that memorable Westminster age, agreed that external organization belongs to the conception of Church, and all the diversities of form existing in reformed Christianity could not neutralize one another enough to confound visibility or eliminate from the ultimate idea of ecclesia the setting in this great mystical body of members to be seen as incorporated with Christ, however much they differ in form or method working for the same consummation: "Differences of administration, but the same Lord;" "Diversities of operation, but it is the same God which worketh all in all." 1 Cor. xii.

2. Presbyterianism has not changed during that time, nearly two centuries and a half, as if it had been built on a rock even before Peter made his great confession of Jesus. It wears to this day the churchly form of all dispensations. It is both visible and invisible, and even its visibility is catholic enough to embrace with ardent charity all that name the name of Christ in sincerity and truth. Not only do "similar parts" of the whole enter the scope of its unity, but dissimilar parts in the visible organization are embraced as true churches in the scope and co-operation of its catholicity. Rejecting still the Anabaptist figment of a perfectly holy Church to be seen in this world without any tares among the wheat, it continues to replenish the visible communion of saints with all that make a credible profession of faith, with-

out pretending to search the hearts of men at the entrance with a certainty of finding out the reality of a saving change. "Gathering churches out of churches" with proselyting aggression has never been the fault of Presbyterian polity, however adventurous her missionary zeal at home as well as abroad. And, however damaging within her own folds a wild enthusiasm of this pietistic nature may have been for a while in the last century, the divided Synods were again united on the original foundations of saving truth and "moderation known to all men."

The distinction between "preaching elders" and "ruling elders," though slurred by many a platitude of criticism among ourselves and sharpened to excess in shoving out of rank the latter and calling them delegates and laymen, we keep with clear discrimination, and retain them both as "commissioners" in office and representation. Perfectly equal in joint assembly as judges, and "apt to teach" in the true latitude of the original, privately, if not publicly also, they are ever distinguished in ordination by a difference in the power of order, the one class given wholly to the administration of "word and sacraments," and the other partially an episcopate of inspection over the life and consistency of membership, without preaching or living at the altar instead of secular business, providing things honest in the sight of all men by the work of their own hands. Both these classes are alike subordinate and appellate, qualified normally to rule the people in particular churches and represent them at every grade of judicatory above, to which they may be specially commissioned.

Representation never runs out as it ascends in these

classes of elders respectively to the higher and highest tribunals of the Church. On the contrary, it has become intensified as it goes up in making higher courts to be representative of lower as well as the people ruled, and the highest of all the most authoritative because it is representative "of all the churches." Conservative more than any other body in Christendom called "Church," this Presbyterian system stands unchanged; and minor eccentricities, like that of time-service, here and there allowed in the tenure of the ruling eldership, are but transitory in observance and reclaimed at length by the solid consistency of the whole structure.

3. Independency, on the other hand, seems to have been changing with almost every generation. In its original weakness of governmental form it coalesced with civil authority in theocratic evolutions over New England, notwithstanding the robust orthodoxy of its churches that intrinsically protested against union of Church and State, and especially the prevalence of Erastian usurpation by the latter, which would consign a proper discipline within the Church alone to civil municipalities and powers for executive action. How far this amalgamation may have led to the discontinuance of ruling elders in the churches may not be known from history; but it is known at a glance that the first principle of such organization would supersede the use of elders to rule, inasmuch as the people only rule themselves and their guides conduct the government—if government it can be, without misnomer—by submitting propositions to the governed, to be adopted or rejected according to their own good pleasure.

John Owen, that mighty theologian of the seventeenth century, was an Independent, adhering all his life-

time to that one of the two essential tenets which will have consultative and not authoritative councils for the reference of difficult and disputed cases of rule and discipline. His logical mind, however, could not approve the other first principle noticed above—governing without governors, elders made servants, the people of each church ruling themselves in their own way and making themselves at once accusers, witnesses and judges in all juridical procedure. Probably the ablest argument ever made against this "confused and uncertain way," as Jonathan Edwards called it, and in behalf of ruling elders for a bench of authority and justice in each particular church, came from the pen of Dr. Owen. Yet, though sustained and urged by Dr. Ames of Old England, and by the Mathers and other great lights of New England, ruling elders were dropped from the system—a great change for the worse, though consistent with its radical defectiveness, already told.

But another great change—for the better, and not the worse, in any of its aspects—has been the communion of churches with one another, not only as they are interlaced in one system, but all systems that are evangelical in creed and becoming outline of constitution. The original indictment for making churches out of churches, thus lacerating the body of Christ to extend the conglomerate of their own propagation, has been cancelled. The munificent charity, the catholic platform, the vast co-operation and the waves of intelligence which flow to the ends of the earth attest the progress of Congregational Independency now. Though all this be not a development from the central force of an inner life in the system itself, as we have seen, it is a problem of growth on the outside which invites a lively solution

and shows how blessed is the interaction of one true Church upon another in breaking the crust of exclusiveness and everywhere venting the pent-up sympathies of sect from the heart of a common Christianity.

Another betterment in progressive change is the solemnity of ordination to follow an election by the people of their pastor. Awkwardly, indeed, according to the original Brownism of Independency, men of the vicinage who are already in the ministry may come or not as they please, being constrained by no command of a Presbytery to lay their hands upon the head of one chosen by the people; so that the inseparable connection between popular suffrage and the recognition and validity thereof in the solemn though not sacramental act of ministers, after the example of apostles, is left a contingency instead of an order appointed by the due authority. Yet, even this approximation to the stand of all historical churches must be reckoned an advance from radicalism to the catholic sympathies which more and more unite conformities in the visible Church.

The principle attained in submitting the electoral vote of a people to the sanction of ministers in the neighborhood by the laying on of their hands in ordination has led Congregational Independency more and more to confide in councils and look beyond its primitive paling to more general assemblies met in the name of Jesus Christ to formulate the expression of truth and right on questions of difficult solution and distracting difference of opinion among the churches. But the specific value of conciliary declaration is lost when it is not discerned and received as authoritative beyond the personal respectability of selected counsellors. Everything in

true Christianity must be more or less a thing of authority, like the teaching of its Founder, else the moral arbitration which settles a dispute and composes peace, wanting this royal stamp, is no "necessary burden" nor binding obligation upon any of the churches, and the subsequent agitation—quieted, perhaps, for a time on the surface—becomes deeper and wider like waves of the sea in proportion to such ventilation. As among the surges of Gennesaret there was no subsidence or safety until the voice of divine authority said, "Peace, be still," so in the deep sea of public opinion, where men float uncertainly and grapple for some anchor that is sure, only the deliverance which comes with such authority can allay disturbances and prevent the tossing of idle and endless debate. When it is objected that "councils may err" and arrogate authority which only counterfeits the divine, we answer that any other ordinance of God, as administered by fallible men, is liable to similar abuse and mistake, and we are justified in ignoring all authority in preaching the word because the preacher may err in the interpretation of his text. Authority does exist in councils which represent fairly the churches, and only the conscience that obeys God rather than man is authorized to make the exceptions which cannot fairly be made without adopting the rule.

And that there is rule to be recognized in councils legitimately called is now more than ever tacitly conceded by Congregational Independency. For why did the memorable debate in the meeting of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions at Des Moines, Iowa, over the Andover departure in respect to a future probation after death held for the heathen, subside in conciliation and good-will on the proposition

submitted to take from the prudential committee the prerogative of judging the theology of candidates for the foreign field and commit this judgment to a theological council—whatever that may mean—if there had been no tacit expectation of a final settlement as authorized in such a quarter? It would be only shifting the dispute from one arena to another interminably if the council designed was to be no more than a "consultative" synod, which can be nothing but advisory in its conclusions. It is admitted that even authoritative assemblies of representative men might not be able to conclude a peace in such an agitation, but they could save their Board of Missions from the dilemma of running without motive or losing support at home by the decision of council as a Presbytery in the premises to break the bone of contention by repudiating the speculation of error in candidates and disowning the corporations which promulge the same. It may be admitted, also, that the decision of any human council inferentially derived from an honest interpretation of Scripture is dogma, and not doctrine positively revealed, and therefore of less obligation devolving than the Confession of Faith adopted. But the measure of its authority is to end controversy in the bosom of the Church whose representation pronounces and promulgates the decree. It may even split the visibility of a Church and occasion a secession, but this evil is assuredly less than a continuance of conflict within, which never ends without a disruption at length that may sever unity with bitter alienation and multiply the fragments of a system which is already weakened by too much disintegration.

Yet another year goes by, and the scheme of conciliar advice, by general consent of the "corporators,"

cannot be adopted because it is inorganic in the nature of their system: it makes no organic connection of the Board with the churches, being simply a representation without authority. And thus that noble American Board—a corporation of civil authority, and not the Church—must go on to wield the right arm of all true churches in sending the gospel abroad by the force of a civil charter mingling its form with the great commission of our exalted Saviour, and virtually making new and continuous the old theocracy of New England —Church and State united, whose "corporators" manage a Christian trust without formal deference to church authority expressed organically.

The conclusion we reach now respecting Independency in the present form of Congregationalism is that the two most radical defects on the score of Church government, transmitted from the Brownism in which it began, remain essentially unchanged and practically make no government at all, properly speaking, in either a sacred or a civil sense. These are, first, small communities visibly separated from all other churches, even those called by their own name, in each of which the officers set over them are servants, and not rulers at all except in the sense that they are part of the people composing the membership, and voting in common with others over whom they are invested with an oversight which is allowed to have no function of authority, but merely the lead in proposing measures for the congregation to enact, and formally declaring the result thereon of membership suffrage into which the official has been merged. Even if it be "regenerate membership" truly in possessing "the spirit of power and of love and of a sound mind," it cannot possess a warrant for setting

aside the instruments or symbols of authority over them which God has appointed in his word. *Secondly*, there is no appeal permitted from the popular decision made in this way, however much it may be made in a corner, in prejudice or passion, ignorance or mistake, to which regenerate nature is liable in this life. There is no tribunal above this one small congregation to which it is amenable for the slur of doctrine, travesty of practice or injustice done to innocent offenders. A lateral assembly of officers and lay delegates may or may not be invited to meet and consider, but never to review and control, the proceedings of an independent court, except to consult on propositions abstracted from actual process. And yet the wisest and best conclusions attained by the council are only counsel which may or may not be accepted by the parties concerned. Society constituted in this way is not government with adequate shape for any one of its branches, legislative, executive or judicial. Churches constituted in this way are not catholic, however true and pure they may be respectively, for all historical catholicity means that office-bearers must be rulers, called such in Scripture by every name that denotes ruling authority, and the people choosing them must be ruled, of course, thereby, and that authority in ruling any particular church, however diminutive, must be graduated in ascending degrees of responsibility for truth and right until a visible supremacy is reached in a general representation of all the churches composed of the old ruling constituency in the generic sense of elders.

Teaching and ruling are distinguished from each other by an obvious variety of meaning, but are absolutely inseparable in the commission of our Lord to evangelize

the world. Discipling men is ruling them to some extent, unquestionably. An official warrant of power is in the very nature of preaching, and coextensive, therefore, with its universality. The preacher to one particular church is just the same to a score of churches besides on occasion, and to a general assembly of churches represented on another occasion, and world-wide as preaching is the intrinsic authority of it must be. And who will say that authoritative application of the word preached must be shut up within the pale of one particular fold after another, and that too in the way of serving, without commanding, also, the consciences to which it is sent?

If, then, the plural of church, and not the singular only, is the legitimate field of teaching elders, it is of ruling elders also in eligible representation, and the association of these together will represent a district as well as a locality, and jointly govern as well as teach all they represent in the collective exercise of these functions. Such a body is what we call a "Presbytery." The *régime* of one locality so conducted with similar combination of these distinct yet inseparable elements of power we call a "Session," though called also, and perhaps with more propriety, a "Consistory," in which alone, through the whole gradation of courts, the rulers outnumber the teachers, giving to the people who choose them to office the utmost advantage of representative wisdom and power in the first and most familiar council that can be had in the visible Church. How far the levels may ascend of higher and appellate judicatories in the system is to be determined by convenience and expediency according to the extent of space and number of particular churches and circumstances of country,

language and tradition. No grade of representation ever becomes too high or too remote for the review and protection of any member, however humble and private.

CHAPTER XVII.

CONSTITUTIONAL IMPORTANCE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

THE relation of one judicatory to another in our system of graduated authority is precisely and well explained by the "Form of Government," which delineates the Presbyterian organization, and to which the student is referred. It is part of our constitution which must be formally approved in order to exercise a ministry among our people, and, beyond this necessity, it claims a searching scrutiny as a compact and logical structure which implies more than it expresses in the principles that underlie its distribution of power among the assemblies, Sessional, Presbyterial, Synodical and General. It has been often debated which is the primary court in the system we approve, and, inasmuch as the Synod is defined "a larger Presbytery," the dispute is narrowed to three—the Session, the Presbytery and the General Assembly. In attempting this problem we are not to be led by the analogies of civil government with which we are conversant, and which are in many features the same as our church government, for these are fundamentally different in the rise and progress of their institution. As already observed, the State comes from multiplicity in its human constituents, but the Church from unity, the fulness of her Head in heaven. She is the body of Christ in a mystical though actual sense.

1. That judicatory of the Church must be first as well as last to be distinguished which is next and nearest the Head in the scope of its oversight and the assemblage of gifts and graces, to the utmost variety, that makes the Church what she is. The accepted definition of the General Assembly as a "representation of all the churches" in this denomination obviously determines that this high court is the primary one in our system. Whether this word "primary" be taken in the sense of time or importance, it is decidedly the character of our General Assembly. No matter about the name. It was called "Presbytery" in 1707; "Synod" in 1717; "General Assembly" in 1789; but in all this progression it was the same in general representation for the time, and only comparative expansion altered the designation, and higher ascent of appeal and review the degree of power. As the number of members increased the visible body of Christ was enlarged in growth, and, as every church in particular and every member individually in his own place and adjustment shared the power of Christ in special modification as a gift, the total distribution from on high represented the Head himself more and more completely; and as the General Assembly at once represents the Head of grace and power most completely, and the aggregate of professing believers most entirely, it should be considered the primary court alike in time and dignity and elementary tuition.

2. The complete ideal of any body or thing is first in the mind of an observer in order to comprehend aright the division and subdivision of parts and the relative position and value of these. We are to study the outline before we can perceive the right direction and situation of what is folded within. We are to study the

meaning and force of general before we can adequately know the bearing and use of partial representation. So we should contemplate the organization of the General Assembly if we would rightly construe the distribution of power and use to the lower levels of Synodical, Presbyterial and Sessional constitution. These all descend from the primitive and single representation of church-power, like that council of apostles and elders in Jerusalem; and we may well assume that the best conformity we have to that original pattern should be studied, surveyed and appreciated in order to understand the relation and propriety of all derivatives and how the General Assembly creates the Synod, and the Synod the Presbytery, and the Presbytery the local Session, in the symmetry of our system. The fact so familiarly observed —that this General Assembly is annually made up of commissioners from the Presbyteries—does by no means indicate that these courts below create the courts above, and especially the General Assembly. It is merely conventional that Presbyteries are made such factors at present, instead of Synods or Sessions, as we readily see these might be made the precincts from which would come the composition of a General Assembly. A wise expediency in the method of making it up cannot modify or translate the intrinsic authority and relative transcendency of a general "representation of the churches" to the Presbyteries only as the fountain.

3. This high court is a body of living men to whom belongs in superlative degree the promise of ubiquitous and everlasting presence on the part of their adorable Head. A living God, a living Christ, a living and eternal Spirit, abides with them as they abide with him, according to his own inspired word. Written constitu-

tions, therefore, so far as they are man-made, cannot create this tribunal, from which, on the contrary, they must emanate as creatures, in the nature and reason of things. Yet this General Assembly is by no means the vicegerent of her Head. She cannot carry all the government upon her shoulder; she cannot stoop, as our infinite Lord himself can do, to inspect and manage little things as well as great things, all interests as well as minute and detailed affairs of administration, and therefore inferior courts are brought into existence by her wisdom for practical help to herself; and these, in succession of both time and degree, increased in number as her exigency and extension required. The voluntary part with which the larger would set off the smaller body of representation for this object is binding alike on both parties, and may not be transgressed by either. The Synod, the Presbytery, the Session, brought into existence in this way, stand henceforth as firmly on the constitution as the General Assembly itself, for this high court cannot go back on itself, its overture, its confirmation, which make vested rights in the lower courts that cannot be revoked by the higher. Thus, and on this principle, the doctrines of our constitution, as contained in the Confession of Faith, and, indeed, all "constitutional rules," are unalterable by the will or prior movement of the General Assembly, the whole Church, represented by the Synod of New York and Philadelphia, having stipulated at the original formation of such Assembly that two-thirds of the Presbyteries may propose alterations or amendments which shall be valid if subsequently enacted by the General Assembly. This organic covenant against the facilities of change is felt by nearly all intelligent churchmen to be still binding alike on Assem-

bly and on Presbytery, for it is an underlying decree of that authority which gave the constitution by which the General Assembly is governed, and which, though not written on the face of this constitution, morally binds us in the record that created the Assembly, and stipulated fundamentally this vital enactment respecting alteration.

But early in the present century this obligation was felt to be a bandage too stringent, making it almost impossible to revise and modify those regulations of method —called "standing rules" at the first—in the exercise of government and discipline which need to be conformed to the varieties of condition and life that pertain to the changing generations of people, in the Church as well as in the world. So, by consent of the churches, tardily and reluctantly given, a distinction was recognized between such procedures of government as relate to its temporal administration and the doctrines contained in the Confession of Faith, which are eternal as the word of God itself in proportion as they are fairly derived from the volume of inspiration. Accordingly, an altered formula was inserted in the constitution, changing "standing" to "constitutional" rules and making it proper authority in the General Assembly, instead of two-thirds of the Presbyteries, to begin the movement for change or amendment in forms of regulated order and application of discipline by overture sent down to all the Presbyteries and receiving the return in writing of all the votes thereon, declaring the result, in case of adoption, to be a part of our constitution. The ultimate ratification by the General Assembly ought never to have been omitted or separated from a final declaration on the adoption of an overture, because the beginning of such a movement, and not the ending, has been the only

modification of the original covenant authorized by the churches, and also because the Assembly must ascertain at last whether an overture has been consistently adopted or adopted only in part, so as virtually to annul the intention of the supreme judicatory in sending it down. This did occur in 1827, when the whole return was set aside as abortive because only parts of a logical whole had been voted by the requisite majority of Presbyteries.

Along with distinctly administrative measures in our constitution thus to be overtured immediately from the Assembly to Presbyteries in the direction of change may be minute portions of the doctrinal standards, which seem to be like rules more than doctrines, and which are alleged fairly to shine with but secondary light, if any, of Holy Scripture, in doubtful interpretation and unconnected with any capital doctrine of the system. Facility of alteration may go to some retrenchment of this kind also without much danger, but only the clerical error, the obsolete word, illogical sentence or detached superfluity, may be allowed to depart readily by this easier gateway of alteration. And the sharp distinction of mode by our fathers should ever be regarded as an emphasis of denial to the right of a General Assembly, or any portion thereof less than two-thirds of the Presbyteries, beginning the motion to reduce, alter, amend or dislocate the Confession of Faith and the Catechisms incorporated therewith. It is a stipulated plank at the foundation of the Assembly, a heritage secured for that august supremacy before it was born, a charter which made it what it is and blessed it with prosperity and strength. Outside of the constitution given with this covenant, the understanding,

nevertheless, exists in equity of prior, fundamental and unchangeable force.

The General Assembly, being at once a representative of Christ, the Head, and all particular churches of the name, is a mystical body, though literally composed of living men from year to year. We cannot, therefore, make it directly the subject of analysis like the civil organizations which it may resemble. Elderships make it up to the sight, and these are authorities which dawn upon mankind at the cradle of the race. Prehistorical but not unrevealed, patriarchal domination was known as soon as "men began to call upon the name of the Lord." Genesis, in holy Scripture, is the first record of social compact, and the authority of man over men, and the claim of age to govern youth and patriarch to organize the subordination of descendants. And in this visible estate the first promise of the gospel was working out mysteriously the first visibility of the Church, though inscrutably folded through many generations. Development was late in time and all its antecedents were synthetical. Corresponding to this fact are all the analogies of nature to be seen. Every form of life in its organism begins with elements in whole, and not in part. Even the tree, which may propagate itself by the twig or the graft when it is grown, must begin from an acorn or a grain of seed in which are folded all the diversities of subsequent germination. But animated life, especially the human body, which inspiration has chiefly selected for its metaphor of a Church, both visible and invisible, cannot either begin or be propagated by a piece or a limb cut off, or in any other way than that of the embryo, which is always the content and source of any development "in continuance." Ps. cxxxix. 15, 16.

The physical mystery of our being as it was sung by David of old became the favorite analogy of the apostle Paul for the mystery of a Church-State, and the first lesson it impresses must ever be that the whole is primary to the parts, that the collective Church is mother of the particular church, that an organic whole must precede an organic part, that the health of the whole must be available for the sustenance and cure of the parts respectively, and that the anointing oil which flows down from the head of our only Priest must suffuse the whole body as it goes "down to the skirts of his garments." We are constrained by all intimations, both in the Old Testament and in the New, to guard our ideal from the misapprehension—occasioned in republican government by the difference of its theory and practice—in beginning with the parts and building up by drawing these together, "the primaries"—a congeries of these indefinitely scattered—as the basis of a nation. In the Church one becomes many; in the State many become one. In the Church unity is broken by the deflection of a part; in the State unity is not broken by the loss of a part, either in territory or in citizenship. As long as loyal numbers fill its army and abide under its rule there is unity intact and continued.

4. The Church in history accords with the institute of her mystical norm in revelation. We have already noticed the primeval assembly of apostles and elders at Jerusalem, representing in council all the churches then existing, and discussing the reference from Antioch of a critical and important question for the time, and deciding with more than advice in return, and more than Antioch to be enjoined, with a decree of binding obligation authoritatively promulgated to all the churches.

Priesthood instead of eldership returning to rule with temple-service and titles restored and the primitive ecclesia moulded again as Levitical and united with imperial despotism, representative government was lost in Nicene Christianity, and her general councils were no more the model of administration as it was originally constituted by apostles and elders. Nothing of its likeness remained but the stringent authority of decisions, and these degenerated apace to intolerance and persecution. The "dictates" of Hildebrand, in which the mediæval papacy culminated, were logically inconsistent with free deliberation of councils, either general or provincial. These were less and less frequently convoked; and when, at irregular intervals, they were summoned to meet, the main business became a mere bolster to the usurpation which called them and registry of decrees inspired at Rome. We must, therefore, come to the Reformation, which emancipated private judgment and public freedom from the yoke of despotic hierarchy, for councils made whole again by sound speech made free and true representation of the churches made fair in the adjustment of ratio and concernment of all.

The Reformed Church of Scotland in its first organization began with a General Assembly coming together spontaneously from all the churches converted, and adopting books of discipline which contained the principles of reconstruction for itself and all subordinate assemblies of Synod, Presbytery and Session as these were to be subsequently set off from time to time and governed by its paramount authority. The practical force of truth developed formation from above, and not below or beside, and embodied itself in constitutional formulas which could not be sent down as overture to courts

below or churches below that were only to be gathered as yet, by the use of such instruments, in teaching "doctrine, discipline and distribution" as these were found in the Bible. For a century, almost, the Second Book of Discipline, amending the imperfections and avoiding the tentative confusion of the First Book, was the platform alike of the Assembly, Synod, Presbytery and Session, although the *imprimatur* of the general and original court alone was affixed and no one below had been invited to vote on its adoption.

When the commissioners from Scotland to the Westminster Assembly of Divines returned with the finished work of that memorable convocation, it was soon adopted and incorporated with existing standards by the General Assembly without any transmission to Synod or Presbytery for the approval by constituencies below. And only then it was, within a few years from this adoption, and after some hundred and forty years of stormy time and fiery trial, through which their symbols of confession had been completed and, as it were, seven times purified, that this venerable mother-Church passed the "Barrier Act," as it is called, by which all change or modification of her constitution thereafter must be overtured to the Presbyteries and enacted only after a majority of these should signify their assent. Thus the whole Church in representation first composed the system by which authority was handed down to courts of her own creation, to be invested there in forms of constitutional immunity, made irrevocable.

The Westminster Assembly itself, though convoked by secular authority when ecclesiastical authorities were all in solution by the force of Puritanical sentiment and zeal, derived no construction whatever from the civil

power above it, nor yet from churchly organizations beside or below it, in a conjunction of singular independence from all sorts of constituency the world over, being a spontaneous "representation of all the churches" and free from all need of apologetical propositions in its Confession of Faith. It was "the whole Church" defining truth, declaring discipline, arranging ministries, according to the Bible, and leaving their whole conciliary work to speak for itself without waiting for a single echo to return or consequent ratification by Presbyteries to make it binding. Its intrinsic force of truth, its marvellous adaptation to the kingdom of Christ, made it the crown of a second Reformation.

In the same century, and but a little while before it, was the Synod of Dort, assembled by the agency of Maurice, prince of Orange, to settle the strife between Calvinism and Arminianism, or the Belgic Confession and the "Remonstrants," who were followers of James Arminius. England, Scotland, Switzerland, Bremen, the Palatinate and Hesse readily came with representation of the churches to join the Belgic deputies in the effort of conciliation, and, this failing in the dispassionate moderation of Contra-Remonstrance, they assembled to vindicate and establish more luminously than ever in the light of Scripture the doctrines contested. Popish bigotry in the government of France forbade the attendance of a Protestant representation from that quarter, yet the summary of evangelical Christendom was never so full in meeting as on that occasion, and never so free from acrimonious debate. And yet the result of deliberation there, descending as a heritage to Reformed churches, never depended on a ratification by constituencies of Synods or Presbyteries, or bishops below in any

or all of the churches represented. Here, again, "the whole Church," was primary as a body, and power of doctrine went downward to the parts instead of upward, as built on a congeries of particular churches below which waited to confirm and sustain it. Arbitration like that has its force in equity more than by the consent of parties in conclusion.

The Reformed Church in France had a National Synod, representing the martyred churches of Presbyterian formation. A creed and standing rules of government, discipline and worship had been adopted as the constitution, which was adhered to with singular faithfulness and precision, but the deputies were not mastered by its letter, which was their own production and alterable at their own good pleasure. They had no Barrier Act to limit and reduce the original and originating powers of that renowned Huguenot representation. The deputies convened with a consciousness of power derived immediately from Christ above, without allegiance to man or man-made constitutions of their own, or instructions from provincial Synods or Classes or Consistories combined. Derived from the Head, and reserved from the members in particular, the will of that consecrated body was their symbol of sovereignty. This appeared in the language of that initiating vow with which the deputies assembled: "We promise before God to submit ourselves to all that may be concluded and determined by your Holy Assembly, to obey and execute it to the utmost of our power, being persuaded that God will preside among you and lead you by his Holy Spirit into all truth and equity by the rule of his word for the good and edification of his Church,

to the glory of his great name; which we humbly beg of his Divine Majesty, in our daily prayers." *

In this entire collation we see that a total representation precedes a partial one as we think of the Church in her primaries of council, that the expansive ideal is more churchly than the local, that the communion of churches must be a postulate of unity with which to begin the organization of particular churches, instead of an afterthought when these are multiplied in the neighborhood or the nation. We see, also, that the colonial planting of Presbyterianism in America, beginning without a written constitution of our own, was invigorated and propelled by the primal forces of Dort, Westminster and Scotland in their "whole-Church" deliverances as the scattered sheep in this wilderness were gathered into particular churches. The first organization of Presbytery was a General Assembly in which these churches were represented, and soon afterward, when other formations of like elderships were added, the whole sphere was called a "Synod," and this body, constituted from all the Presbyteries, exercised its general authority in 1729 by adopting unanimously the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms. This adopting act was subscribed by all the ministers present, eighteen in number, and made the condition henceforth of admission to ministerial communion and authority, without being sent down to the Presbyteries or the individual churches for sanction or concurrence. Unlike the congregational covenant in each separate church, to be subscribed by every member, official or unofficial, the Presbyterian covenant is adopted only by the official representatives of all the churches gathered together in council, while

* Quick's *Synodicon*, vol. i. p. 478.

the liberty of dissent to any extent short of scandal or disorder has been left to the professing people—"all such as we have grounds to believe Christ will at last admit to the kingdom of heaven."

We may therefore append to this indication of principles and facts underlying the whole fabric of Presbyterian formation several corollaries of practical importance to the symmetry and safety of our scriptural system.

(1) The General Assembly, in its nature, must possess the power of *eminent domain* among the judicatories and churches of this denomination—that is, though all other courts below it, and set off from time to time by its authority in representing all the churches, must be sharply defined and limited respectively by the written constitution, which details their subsidiary province precisely as they work together in helpful performance of the duty assigned to the whole Church, yet this whole Church, in the General Assembly which represents it, cannot be exhausted in power by its own definitions delivered. There must always be a reserved authority for exigences that men cannot forecast. No prevision of uninspired wisdom will ever invent a flexibility of charter in constitutions on paper which is adequate for the strain that is always coming on the Church in her militant condition. Even her best combinations made outside of a written constitution may soon prove to be mistaken, sending to subvert more than to help the polity and use of such an instrument, and the intervention of her paramount authority in reversing and rescinding those unwise regulations must not be condemned as unconstitutional, assuredly. Much less may it be charged with spiritual despotism in putting forth power in that way which the Lord hath given "for edification and not for destruction."

The power of eminent domain is always a reservation for extreme necessities arising in the revolutions of time and the world. God has set his Church on a watch-tower manned with living witnesses and provided with the promise of his Spirit and lively oracles already in hand; and when the enemy cometh in like a flood, the standard to be lifted up against him is not one of parchment alone, but of discretionary expedience also, becoming the situation and the need. Policy in exigences must of course never infringe upon the constitution by which grantor and grantees are mutually bound, and the exercise of it beyond the constitutional provisions can hardly ever become despotic or destructive because of the best conceivable guarantees of moderation and right—the inhabitation of the Holy Ghost as a counsellor to be pleased, the inspired directory of his own record which is "profitable for correction," and the fact that this General Assembly is a yearly convocation elected anew every twelvemonth by the churches it governs.

(2) Dissent from extraordinary measures of this high court should never protest with a view to separate from the body in dissolution of organic union. Where no constitution is wrecked in tiding it over the breakers unskilfully, the pilotage may be warned without being discharged for want of experience. The old method of appealing from an erring council to the next one which is better informed is the right way of redress for discontented parties who remonstrate against the unprecedented in proceedings of the General Assembly.

(3) Subsequent Assemblies are free to change and reverse any measure, outside of the constitution, that has been ill-advised, mistaken or disproved by the logic of events. The reproach of inconsistency, often cast

upon the records of our highest judicatory, is unwarrantable, in view of the supreme discretion reposed in its nature. When moved, beyond the lines of organic law and boundaries of constitutional enactment, to confront new dangers to truth and holiness, and to use untried weapons taken from adversaries in the combat, it is human to err even in the highest places of imperfectly sanctified humanity. Our General Assembly has inherited this admission, made at Westminster centuries ago. It is her glory instead of her defect, therefore, to stand corrected from year to year, although inconsistency in her transactions through all contingencies of the past is exceptional and rare indeed.

(4) Exempt from all iron-clad rigidity in her casual deliverances beyond a constitution, the secret of true progress may be found in this right and power of eminent domain. Though she sends ahead no mere hypothesis in anything of progress, and becomes of necessity empirical in judging opportunities and testing the measures of innovation, there is always one hand holding fast what has been already attained, and another waving at high noon to signalize progress in all the lines of thought, in all endeavors of benevolence, in all fulfilment of prophecy, in all freedom of combination with other denominations to spread the gospel and lay foundations of the Redeemer's kingdom, binding liberty and union together in that co-operation which agrees to differ and rejoices in the truth, making increase in the strength of honest convictions equal to the increase of charity in meeting diversities at the house of our common Master.

CHAPTER XVIII.

ORDINANCES OF THE CHURCH.

ORDINANCES are institutions of divine authority relating to the worship of God. A threefold divinity must be considered in their nature, common to all of them, however distinctive the character of each.

1. They have been dictated by the supreme authority of God himself, and must not be abrogated, altered or omitted by men at any time or in any circumstances but those of impossibility when the observance cannot be rendered because of personal unfitness, providential hindrance or excusable inability of obedience. Regulations of minor importance may be made by Church authority in connection with divine ordinances to supply the facilities of order, time, place, and even mode of observance, which does not obscure nor pervert at all the ordinance itself; and these are variable and dispensable and wise only and in proportion as they subserve the apprehension of divine authority for the ordinance itself.

2. All divine ordinances are worshipful in their nature. Worship is always adoration in act, and, of course, adoration is active toward God directly. There is only "one Mediator between God and men," and he himself is God with the sympathies of our nature upon him. Him we worship, and the Father in him, spiritually as directly also, led by the Spirit, helped and advocated by the

Spirit, in this intimate access of adoration to God: "But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." And we may reasonably note under this declaration of our Lord the many familiar interventions of sacerdotalism in our day which seem to be worse than "in vain" for the direct and immediate adoration of Jesus—images, crucifixes, pictures and intercession of saints, dead or alive, to help the common people in worshipping God. Human art is not divine wisdom, and in its best perfection must be daring folly when it puts a hand between the sinner and his Saviour, between the soul and God its Maker.

3. A third element of divinity in true Church ordinances must be that of propitiation. Every one of them bears the mark of atonement made once for all by a divine Person. The Object of all adoration must open up for us the way to himself, and the truth, the life, the sureness, of this way. The sureness must be "a covenant by sacrifice." The sacrifice must be of infinite value, in which all the treasures of Godhead are hidden, and we approach him on this way because we are bought to come, and made to come, by the same prevenient grace that achieved the redemption. It is remarkable that the original Greek word which in its plural is translated "ordinances" in Luke i. 6 and elsewhere signifies "justification" as its essential meaning, distinguished, on the one hand, from commandment, and on the other from condemnation.

In the letter of this *δικαίωμα*, we have justification on the ground of righteousness judicially imputed as a characteristic element in all the ordinances of divine worship. And we know "it is God that justifieth." Thus the warrant, the worship and the acceptance are all alike

divine—of God, and not of man: "Ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels; to the general assembly and church of the first born, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect; and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel." Heb. xii. 22–24.

This glorious indication to the Hebrews of New-Testament ordinances in their divinity of sanction, use and procurement as means of grace to men emphasizes in every line the communion of saints, whether in the body or out of the body, past, present and future, in assemblage with other spirits of glorified creation looking into these things. We must infer, therefore, publicity of observance to be the crowning duty of all believers in using these means of grace, and that the unspeakable benefit of private use is enhanced to each one by the participations of a great congregation. Though the kingdom of God is within us, and with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, yet with the mouth confession is made unto salvation in diffusing its joy to others, and so multiplying our own.

Enumeration of Ordinances.

We have this complete in the seventh chapter of our Presbyterian Form of Government, as follows: "The ordinances established by Christ, the head, in a particular church, which is regularly constituted with its proper officers, are prayer, singing praises, reading, expounding and preaching the word of God, administering baptism and the Lord's Supper; public solemn fasting and thanks-

giving, catechizing, making collections for the poor, and other pious purposes; exercising discipline; and blessing the people."

All these ordinances are liturgical, more or less—that is, public service rendered for the people, to the people and by the people, any of these senses or all of them together being included fairly in the term *liturgy*, obviously derived from two Greek words which signify "the public" and "work." This compound word is Athenian, most probably, in its origin, and is intensely *personal* in its allusion and use at Athens and other Greek communities to which it was transferred. The classical meaning was never a public document on parchment, and much less a book, and still less a missal mass-book in sacerdotal oblation. It was a capable man of means and patriotic devotion of his time and talents and wealth to the public need, both in war and in peace—a man who thought it mean to give only what the taxation required in law without giving more spontaneously to the exigences of state until his riches were exhausted, and then devolving the task upon the next richest man who thought it an honor to succeed him.* It required all the eloquence and democratic influence of Demosthenes to reduce that civil liturgy to more equable taxation and common consecration of the people, yet the capabilities, resources and faithfulness of persons continued to be, objectively as well as subjectively, the liturgies of ancient time.

Correspondently in Christian time, the witnessing apostles made fitness and faithfulness of elders and evangelists properly chosen to administer New-Testament ordinances to be the liturgies canonically sanctioned

* See the Dictionaries of Brande and Anthon, both.

for a world-wide Christianity; and such were to be traditional liturgies for all time indefinitely future. "Liturgy" is the Greek word transferred; "ministry" is the same translated. Faithfulness and ability of living and successive ministers of the gospel are the true liturgical elements of divine service henceforth and ever: "The things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also;" "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth;" "Follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart." 2 Tim. ii.

When we turn from revelation containing these liturgical suggestions to history in its fabulous tradition, the first pravity discovered in Christian worship was found in so-called liturgies of the book kind. The liturgies of Peter, Matthew, Mark and James are mentioned by certain Greek and Roman authors, who reason thus in proving them to be genuinely apostolical after making the assertion that they were such: "They contain prayers for the dead; the actual transmutation of bread and wine at the sacrament into the real body and blood of Christ, and this transubstantiation offered as a literal sacrifice on the altar; therefore they must have originated from the apostles, who, we know, taught these doctrines."

From the sham pretences of such a logic we turn to the pages of authentic history and search in vain for the existence of written liturgies anywhere until the fourth century of the Christian era. At the beginning of that century the emperor Diocletian, a credulous man misled by an ambitious son-in-law and instigated by a pagan priesthood, began his persecution of the Christians.

Being averse to the destruction of life, and having them in his army and his court, and even his own household, he cautiously restrained the first edict against Christians from bloodshed, and ordered only their suppression by the arrest of their visible prosperity and its causes. Offices and all positions of trust and influence were to be taken from them, and especially their worship was to be hindered by the demolition of their temples and burning to ashes of all their sacred books and documents and records.

In the reported execution of that edict mention is made of Bibles burned—fragments of canonical Scripture used and kept in their churches—but no mention or hint is given of liturgies found and consumed. Not even the "Gallican Liturgy" was noticed at all, which in subsequent history vaunts the conjectural date of 176. When we consider the fact that Constantius Chlorus, father of Constantine the Great, was then reigning in Gaul, a Christian too—as much, at least, as any Cæsar could be at that time—and an object of special jealousy to the Cæsars of the East, we must wonder that the manual of worship at his court was not signalized in the flames of that imperial persecution. On the hypothesis of any writing but the Holy Bible, in whole or in part, composed for the devotions of Christian worship within the first three hundred years, the escape of such a liturgy from such a conflagration is inexplicable.

We come to the conclusion, therefore, that the first objective liturgy, in the modern ecclesiastical sense of the word, was composed by that renowned and accomplished Basil of Cæsarea in Cappadocia who flourished about the middle of the fourth century, followed about twenty years later by the still more celebrated Chrysos-

tom of Constantinople. Both of these Fathers were great rhetoricians from the schools of Libanius, and each of them produced a liturgy with his own name to it, still retained, to signify an original production peculiar to their times and places and characters respectively, and therefore not derived at all, in either case, from any venerable "common-prayer" book antecedently compiled. In fact, the prior one of Basil came from his pen just as he was drawing up rules and regulations for monks in the monasteries he was founding. He was himself a rigid ascetic, and wore the habit of a monk after he was made an archbishop, and it seemed to be his aim to make "regulars" of all worshipping people under his authority.

These two liturgies, though near to each other in time, were not regarded as rival productions, each one aspiring to the stereotype of canonical fixedness in public worship, but, like the conducting of divine service by the parochial bishops of our own day, they were subjective more than objective, free and voluntary, bearing the stamp of each official in particular. Uniformity, however, becoming imperial about the same time, soon afterward compelled each bishop to say the same prayers continually in the particular church he led. This itself was no hardship nor yoke upon the freedom of worship inconsistent with the capabilities and culture of an officiating minister, as long as the same prayers were composed by himself according to the need and circumstances of his parish. To repeat with *memoriter* utterance the same original prayer when it is the "long" or general prayer may be truly liturgical, as it is subjective and individual.

Probably no minister of the present century was more

liturgical, in the true scriptural sense, than John McMillan, the pioneer and patriarch of Presbyterianism in Western Pennsylvania, of whom Daniel Webster said, "Truly, he was a voice crying in the wilderness." His praying and his preaching were signalized in making that wilderness blossom as the rose, in raising up, almost without any books, by his own tuition, a powerful ministry, and in founding institutions of learning which through almost half the century furnished nearly one-fifth of all the ministers on this continent who belonged to this denomination. Yet his "long prayer" on the Lord's day was never one of "irregular and extravagant effusions," but, on the contrary, it was almost invariably the same prayer in topics and scriptural expression—so much that his rustic hearers could mark the time by the course of his utterance and know in his phraseology how near he was to the end. But at the close of his sermon the short prayer was always rich and fresh, varied and pertinent, on every subject and occasion. All this was perfect liturgy without a book. Liturgy was in that living man himself—his personal ability, his good sense, his practical piety and devout fervor of soul in dispensing ordinances, combining all the value to his people of "common prayer" with the quickening interest of supplication ever new in adaptation to things both "old and new" among the treasures of scriptural preaching.

Liturgy, as defined in the modern ecclesiastical sense by standard lexicographers—"A formulary of public worship; the ritual according to which the religious services of a church are performed"—is not a scriptural definition at all. In the Bible this word, whether noun, verb or participle in its use, indicates always the *ministry* or *ministering* of living and well-qualified men person-

ally exerted. By a beautiful metonymy the Attic original is reproduced in the New-Testament morning of Christian worship. (See the admirable commentary of Dr. Joseph Addison Alexander on Acts xiii. 2: "Its true sense is the general one expressed in the translation 'ministering,' in the discharge of their official functions, with particular reference to public worship" (*λειτουργούς*) —"his ministers a flame of fire." Heb. i. 7.)

Of course, "ministering" extends the liturgical sense to all the ordinances enumerated above, and the specific variations peculiar to each will be noticed more fully when we come to explain them in detail. But once for all we must notice that no "formulary" prepared by inspired or uninspired man is ever hinted in Holy Scripture as given for exact and verbal uniformity in the tenor of sanctuary service, and we therefore may well reverse the dictum of South when he wrote, "The extemporizing faculty is never more out of its element than in the pulpit," and write here that the canons of canting uniformity are never more out of their element than in the pulpit, for the very same reason that "extemporizing" is condemned—the lack of premeditation. We never can serve God and the people there with what costs us nothing, and surely there should be more of cost in that sublime vocation to prayer and preaching than a mechanical and easy exercise of turning over leaves of a book given to one simply to be read where it has been read a thousand times before, and along with a manuscript which may perhaps be made of his own thoughts in preaching not more than twenty minutes long.

On the other hand, all experience and observation will attest the fact that premeditation is inseparable from what is called extempore preaching, and is a supreme necessity

once for all, and specially continued every week to the preacher—any preacher fit for the pulpit and worthy of the place—premeditation to pray as well as preach, and even to read the word of God aright in its letter, which we shall see in dissertation on "reading" as a particular ordinance. The ruminating labor of thought and solicitude of soul which become the minister of earnest mind and heart whose liturgy is alive in ready utterance without a book have no parallel in painstaking preparation for public speech in any other department of human eloquence; and so the true liturgist, whose administration ponders what he has to say in connection with every ordinance, will be ready for "the times" as well as time, representing the age, the culture, the change, the "operation" of God's hand in the present as well as past experience of his people.

The welling of deep thought, the pertinence of seasonable application, the vivid emotions of originality, the vital transitions of analysis and good order, the directness of good speech, the unction and pathos,—all belong to the liturgy of living ministers who prepare without manual, but with all their might, as becomes the weakness and contrition of mortal man in stepping to the pulpit most acceptably to God and his disciples. Luther trembled as he went up; Summerfield palpitated as he touched the pulpit door. Not, by any means, that reading homily from paper and "collects" from books two hundred years old, and yet the same, are to be forbidden by any law or to be disparaged as unprofitable to pious worshippers who prefer that way, but because that way is not liturgical in the scriptural sense of New-Testament liturgy, being objective more than subjective, because the living minister is more consubstantiated with

the word of God where it it is "gotten by heart" and readily recited from a fond memory than when it is toned with the best measures of prose and poetry while the eyes of the reader fail to gather animation from the faces of the people.

It may be added, also, in this connection, that versatility of thought in due preparation for living liturgies, which corrects itself in premeditation without book in hand until it is rightly matured, makes a ripe ministration comparatively; for extemporized manuscript, as it is hurried by the hebdomadal necessity of a parochial bishop, is often the most shallow of all decent preparation for the first day of the week. Attenuated stuff on paper is commonly worse than extempore gibberish in speaking on the part of an educated minister, and yet the blame of thinness must be attached to the method more than to the man. He has no time to think more and more deeply, nor to revise and correct the improvisated pages before him, which, it may be, have not been quite written out when the bell is rung for public service. Machine preaching and praying will not save time, but lose it, in the liturgical ministrations of the man whose premeditation possesses him in mind and heart more than he possesses it in book and folio.

True "ministering," the right translation of true liturgies, will never be perfunctory in performance —that is, according to the old definition of Bishop Hall: "Done only for the sake of getting through, regardless how done." The "well done" may be well enough when the minister is not capable of more than writing out, with full mind and warm heart, his meditated thoughts to be read in public just as they are written. The highest regard for his people and the

presentation of truth and the effect of his composition when he himself looks at them through an intervention of paper only may consist even with eminent and true service in the pulpit, but a still "more excellent way" is the direct way a servant takes in waiting on his master. The master's word is always impromptu; its urgency will wait for no plans of facile obedience, or until the minister puts on a badge or dons a livery or shoulders a burden of his own. Method is madness when it delays or encumbers "the swift of foot" who run as "swift messengers" to rescue men that are perishing in sins. Directness of speech is more direct when it is not written out beforehand. Dr. Watts illustrated this in the case of a steward to an English baron who was much aggrieved by the insubordination and mischief of the servants. When he complained to his lord of their conduct, the baron said, "Go, and in my name chide them sharply." But the steward said, "I cannot chide with my words; but if your lordship would write a chiding, I shall go and read it to them." "The baron wrote, the steward read and the servants smiled."

These ordinances of worship are all of them liturgical in connection with civil observances of events which are providentially ordered in human life. The three of these that are most important and signal are *birth*, *marriage* and *death*. Here Church and State, private and public interest, legal and social record, meet together to do what might be done by each of these distinctions alone, yet best done when they are conjoined and solemnized by the offices of religion, which are the ordinances of worship, prayer, preaching and benediction especially.

1. Birth sends to the man of God for some recognition

of divine ownership at the advent of an immortal creature: "Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father so also the soul of the son is mine." Ezek. xviii. 4. "Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord." Ps. cxxvii. 3. The signet of this natural possession and covenanted heritage was made at the first organization of the visible Church in the family of Abraham and in the rite of circumcision. The application of that seal was public as it could be made: "All that were born in his house, and all that were bought with his money, every male among the men of Abraham's house." Here was household initiation at the beginning of ecclesia, and so it was continued in public ministration to all ages of human life from ninety years to eight days old: "And Abraham circumcised his son Isaac being eight days old, as God had commanded him."

Publication, or the liturgy of the seal requiring greater expansion to all families of the earth and both sexes of humanity, our Lord substituted for circumcision, a world-wide convenience in sealing the family covenant: "Teaching all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Here we see the two ordinances of preaching and baptism manifestly proper at the birth of any person, male or female, and at the house of Cornelius the centurion, a devout man, where the Gentiles were first admitted to sealing ordinances, we have the scope of baptism as well as instructive preaching, plainly comprehending the whole household of Cornelius with "his kinsmen and friends," age and nonage assembled together at his call to receive instruction and baptism in the name of Jesus Christ. "Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God," said

Cornelius to Peter, and while the latter was yet speaking as a witness for Christ "the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word." Then Peter exclaimed, "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?"

Here, undoubtedly, is intimated the legitimate extension of baptism to as wide a variety of age, at least, as the household of Abraham contained, where the ancient seal was administered alike to subjects who were ninety years old and infants that were but eight days old. Susceptibility of the Holy Ghost in his regenerating agency is all that conditions Christian baptism for birth in the family of any "devout man who fears God, with all his house." "The ordinances of heaven" embrace alike stupendous magnitude and imperceptible minuteness. The same eternal Spirit that garnished the heavens with great stars and little ones—so little that their light is lost on the Milky Way—has condescended to do likewise in "the church that is in the house;" and say, as Peter did in the house of Cornelius, Let "them be baptized in the name of the Lord."

The liturgical performance of this rite on the occasion of birth requires, of course, an assembly at least of the household, and as many "kinsmen and friends" as can be called together to witness the solemnity and unite in supplication for the thing signified by the application of baptismal water, the sprinkling of atoning blood, the regenerating and sanctifying power of the Holy Ghost, and all the blessings of covenanted mercy and grace. Private baptism is not liturgic, as it ought to be, and lay baptism is not the ordinance at all. Surely in "ministering" a minister is required, and the minister is an official person

alike in Scripture and in ecclesiastical diction. Baptism is belittled, indeed, if not a mockery, when it is put above its own official dispensation. Made so essential to the salvation of an infant that it must be done with or without an authorized person to do it, this great ordinance of worship is changed to a fetich of vain superstition.

It is only in the "public service" and authorized ministration of household baptism that this ordinance can be paralleled by the analogous treatment of birth in the civil oversight through all civilized countries of the world, and especially our own. The family circle, the school district, the State, the nation,—all make up their vital statistics with the beginning as well as end of human life in reckoning with particular attention. Courts of justice, both in the equities of chancery and in the statutes of law, inquire diligently about the birth, in all its circumstances of time and place, genealogy and heirship, as they determine right and settle the claims of generations. Even if the family covenant had not descended, from Abraham to Peter, as this apostle declared it had fully and with wider extension than ever, nature itself would have cried out for something in the room of circumcision to signalize with offices of religion the first epoch of each personality in "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation."

If Christianity does not call for the census of nativity and promptly proceed to recognize with ritual honor those who are born within her pale, interposing for the gospel with an ordinance of worship to greet them and own them and mark them and seek them as her own, then, truly, the seed of the Church is an orphanism, and "the mother of us all" is recreant with indiffer-

ence to family record and Church continuity at the crisis when a mother's peculiar attention and special care must be engaged as it is never possible again to be in the career of human life. The baptism of infant children couches in it the identity of the Church under all dispensations, and the analogy of all wise, humane and cultured economies in forwarding the best civilization for the populations of our globe.

2. Marriage, the next most important event of life to youth at maturity, like the birth of sons and daughters, must be claimed alike by the Church and the State and be mixed in its relations to either. It is a civil contract and a sacred mystery together. A dissolution of the contract by any court or forum of civil justice cannot absolve the moral obligation from its binding force in the authority of the Church except for cause which has been specified in Holy Scripture. The union of parties in matrimonial bonds, like that of a regenerate soul with Christ in heaven, is perpetual as it is pure and sincere. Only the demonstration that such regeneracy is false by full discovery of hidden crime or flagitious guilt, according to Bible mention, will reconcile the Church to the separations of divorce.

In Christendom for the first three hundred years marriage seems to have been simply ecclesiastical in the mode of its consummation, solemnized by the ministers of Christ alone. "Only in the Lord" was the marriage motto prefixed to everything about the solemnity—the parties, the vows, the witnesses and the official ministration. The early Fathers, from Tertullian to Chrysostom, were in unison with such an emphasis on marriage. Equally religious, or more so, was the antenuptial contract—the espousals, the betrothment, what

we now call the engagement, of parties to each other; and the actual formality of the wedding was mostly in the form of benediction by Christian ministers and congratulation by Christian witnesses. But after the Church herself was wedded to the State by imperial domination, all the ordinances of a divinity above were levelled to the plane of secular appointments by man, the civil contract in marriage,—which in itself was both natural and right—became the preponderating element and gradually pushed the ministers of religion aside, making the sanctions of Christianity an empty ceremony and perverted sacrament.

This profaneness continued until the time of Charlemagne. The monasticism which regarded marriage as impure and religiously unholy had now spread its cloisters over the Christendom of Europe, Africa and Asia, and the consequent necessity of celibacy in the secular clergy also—now enforced by council after council made up of their own kind—only stamped the debasement deeper, until that which the apostle of the Gentiles had declared to be "honorable in all" (Heb. xiii. 4) was now sunk beneath the dignity of a civil right alone to confirm a bargain of any sort. But reaction came with Charlemagne, that magnificent statesman of the Middle Ages. He knew enough of the Bible —which, it is said, he loved to read and teach as much as Alcuin did—to see that all was out of joint in Church and State and social interests of every kind as long as marriage was inferior holiness to be disparaged and dishonored so. He looked upon it as the main prop of his empire, and therefore the civil element and aspect of its importance were not overlooked by the sagacious eye which surveyed a line of transition, from the faded

cultus of ancient Christianity in his time, to the worse fanaticism of mediæval darkness and agitation, come, and yet to come, with worse degeneracy. He could not go transversely at this line and become reformer in restoring the simplicity of heroic ages in the Church, for that prevailed by suffering, which was not his temper, even with the cross upon his banners. The weapons of his warfare were carnal, and not mighty through God to the pulling down of strong superstition. But the practical wisdom of his mind could see that the family institute was the basis of all temporal good and stable empire, and must contain a celestial mystery which ministers of religion should solemnize, while functionaries of the State would sufficiently recognize, under the hands of a priesthood, the inviolable compact in marriage for this life which all civil welfare and safety required.

Accordingly, this potentate compelled the clergy to honor in the people what they dishonored in themselves. Civil marriage was forbidden, and the reaction, as usual, was carried to the opposite extreme of utter prohibition —so much that imperial authority denounced the civil contract alone as mere concubinage. And so much has a sacred mystery been restored to the ceremony of wedlock ever since that the parenthesis of Paul in the New-Testament revelation ("I speak concerning Christ and the church") remains infixed, the sentiment of all intelligent observers, whether papal, Protestant or neither, to this day.

The great Reformation with common consent has readjusted the solemnity of marriage to the right balance and proportion of the two characters, civil and religious, which compose it by discarding alike the monkery and paganism that Constantine allowed and the ritual priest-

liness that Charlemagne commanded. Probably the best expression of this equipoise to be found is in the Directory for Worship adopted by the Westminster Assembly of Divines in the seventeenth century and made one of our own symbols now and still. See the eleventh chapter and first two sections, as follows:

"I. Marriage is not a sacrament; nor peculiar to the Church of Christ. It is proper that every commonwealth, for the good of society, make laws to regulate marriage; which all citizens are bound to obey.

"II. Christians ought to marry in the Lord: therefore it is fit that their marriage be solemnized by a lawful minister; that special instruction may be given them, and suitable prayers made, when they enter into this relation."

The second section above was resisted, indeed, by the learned Selden, in his book entitled *The Hebrew Wife*, because he was Erastian, a lawyer and writer at the head of an Erastian party in the turbulent time of the Commonwealth, which party was utterly opposed to clerical prerogative and struggled to restore a civil ascendency over everything in religion but mere instruction and persuasion. Even all the ordinances of worship at marriage were proscribed by that infatuation.

These are preaching, prayer, blessing and discipline. The first of these includes on this occasion, with the utmost brevity, instruction and exhortation; the second, adoration and entreaty; the third, Old-Testament or New-Testament form of benediction; the fourth, a challenge at the first and admonition at the last. These four elements may be distributed variously in worshipping God at the solemnity of marriage, and skill exquisite as it is devout will be needed to do it well.

Words here, not things, are best to convey your meaning: "Words fitly spoken are like apples of gold in pictures of silver." A ring is not an apple, and what does it mean? No phrasing of the sense could be more ambiguous. In the fashions of ancient Christianity the ring is mentioned as *annulus pronubus*—something given *before* marriage, privately, to seal the fidelity of parties in betrothal, but, of course, in that sense it is not in the *liturgy* of marriage, which must be a "public service."

The publication of marriage is always indispensable, alike in the purpose and in the consummation, wherever it is to be solemnized in a Christian community. Private marriage cannot be liturgical; clandestine marriage cannot be allowed. Ordinances of divine worship, like their adorable Master, "cannot be hidden," and without these wedlock is hardly civil, and is decidedly pagan.

III. The *third* main event of human life on earth is the end of it in time. What birth begins and marriage doubles death dissolves in the separation of body and soul. And here comes an epoch of unchangeableness appointed in the destiny of man beyond which our existence will be continuous only in the development of germs that never die. Probation is over and eternal life goes on, immortal, with or without a body and with life more and more abundantly given. Probation means change; and if its process of trial be not determined at the first death, it will not be at the second. Beginning again and again, the series of indecisive proof would never end, and all eternity must wait for the finish of moral probation, precluding the moral and intellectual progress which begins with what is fixed, in tuition, before death occurs: "In the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be." Eccl. xi. 3. This awful

position which death occupies in the moral government of God should gather to its requiem many of his ordinances—the reading, the preaching, the singing, the prayer, the benediction. Where these cluster and crowd the time there is scarcely a minimum left for words of panegyric on the deceased. And this is just as it ought to be. The funeral discourse ought seldom or never to be memorial sermon. If this be needed for history, let curiosity wait for the proper time. And let the burial-service be a solemnity of reverential and adoring worship. Anything like biography at this conjuncture will be but curious diversion of soul. It will hardly ever satisfy the mourners with adequacy and completeness, and will hardly ever fail to waken criticism in others who subtract from eulogy even more than balancing defects; and thus may be lost the great advantage of a striking event in providence to enliven with fresh interest eternal truths of grace on which we live now and for ever.

Narrative, therefore, is wisely funereal as it turns new light on themes of preaching—the vanity of life, the wages of sin, the certainty of death, the end of probation, the death of death in the death of Christ, good hope through grace, the redeeming of time, the comfort of the Spirit, the consolations of the gospel and the triumphs of the resurrection. In short, all the sublime beliefs of Christianity may converge illumination at the rite of Christian burial. The ordinance of reading without note or comment is itself so abundantly supplied for the same subject with pages both of the Old Testament and the New that the richest variety of pertinence to the occasion may be found in reading alone. And so it is of psalmody and song—old and "new

song," plaintive and triumphant, sung in the sanctuary below, where sorrow weeps, and sung in the sanctuary above, where "the Man of sorrows, acquainted with grief," hath ascended and called the sympathies of heaven to respond: "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth;" "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away."

But prayer on the event of death is the chief ordinance of worship through all the ages of mortality among Christians. No other approach to "the King eternal" can come so near him or touch his sovereignty with such intimacy of utterance, bowing at the inmost shrine of his decrees and there becoming itself a thing decreed as condition precedent to real success at a throne of grace in reference to mysteries of providence: "And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear;" "Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him." Both old and new dispensations thus bind prayer up with inscrutable relations of oracle and event.

Yet prayer is not to be offered for the dead themselves except in thanksgiving, which is only a part of prayer; and even this part is proper only at the death of true believers, and for the living, not the dead, in availability. We thank God for the example of living to his glory which they leave to us, and for the victory over sin and death which they achieved by faith and the strength of his arm. This gratitude in prayer, expressed on the death of the righteous, became, however, probably a

transition-point in history for the beginning of that absurd superstition "prayers for the dead and to the dead." That austere enthusiast of the second century Tertullian was probably the first to mention it when he called the death-day of martyrs their birthday, and suggested natal honors to be rendered yearly at their tombs. Thanks for the instant glorification of immaculate souls at death soon led a vain imagination to speculate on the case of imperfect saints at their departure from the body without full preparation for a welcome to the blessedness of heaven. Some intermediate paradise was invented where they should be detained for a complete purgation, and probation there called back probation here to help it through by prayer and eucharistic sacrifice.

"Purgatory" came from the loss of sound theology in regard to the distinction between justification and sanctification—the latter gradual, and the former without degrees. All the glory of Nicene Christianity was overshadowed by the darkness and confusion of ignorance on this radical subject. Even Augustine prayed for his mother, Monica, after her death, supposing that, perfect as she seemed to be on earth, some unseen mixture of sin in her soul needed intercession still by the sacerdotal son surviving her. How much better than the best orthodoxy of that "Augustan age" is the "Shorter Catechism" in our hands!—"The souls of believers are, at their death, made perfect in holiness, and do immediately pass into glory; and their bodies, being still united to Christ, do rest in their graves till the resurrection."

Becoming this assurance will be the doxology of blessing to all surviving believers: "The love of God, the grace of Christ and the communion of the Holy Ghost."

A more special form than this epitome of all benediction is given by the apostle Paul at the close of his letter to the Hebrews, where he says, "Pray for us" (not for the dead); "Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."

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